

# Revenue Enablement in the Technology Sector

Research delivering insights and recommendations for Sales and Marketing Leaders, and Chief Revenue Officers.

2024

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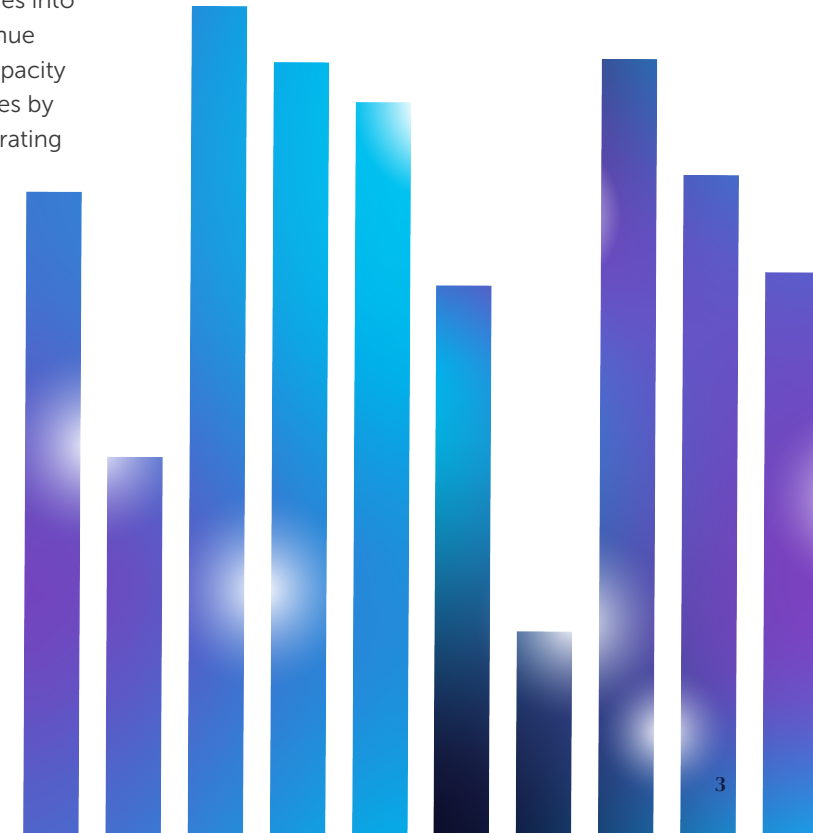
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# Revenue Enablement



## Guest Foreword

Whilst the term itself may still be a work in progress, Revenue Enablement resonates as a foundational theme in reshaping how businesses align, connect and interact with their customers on their ever-evolving buying journeys. The commercial landscape we face today is characterised by customer expectations and market dynamics continually redefining the rules of engagement. In this environment, the concept of Revenue Enablement offers the promise of sustainable success, along with a roadmap to achieve it. This report delves into the potential and the pitfalls of a Revenue Enablement approach, exploring its capacity to address these commercial challenges by fostering internal cohesion and accelerating the customer journey.



## Commercial Adoption

The idea that an integrated, holistic approach to the customer buying experience offers businesses the best foundation for sustainable growth may sound like common sense, however due to competing priorities, cultural misalignment, unfocused leadership or poor insight it is far from common practice. This report highlights the key elements of a successful Revenue Enablement strategy to bring this to fruition, whilst outlining the challenges that will be faced along this journey. Creating the optimal environment for frictionless customer sales takes introspection, collaboration, rigorous data management and purposeful, committed leadership. Whilst there is often the urge to optimise for expediency rather than assess the broader basis of any interaction, this must be avoided, with any changes implemented being flexible enough to embrace the need for continual improvement. This requires significant cultural and organisational humility, which can be lacking in many organisations.

At a time when the business landscape is continually evolving, the concept of Revenue Enablement emerges as a key focus as businesses strive for differentiation in a customer-centric marketplace. This report presents a comprehensive study of the awareness, interpretation and adoption

of a Revenue Enablement approach among diverse audiences, highlighting both the promise and the challenges inherent in this paradigm shift.

## Building and Aligning Value

With this new approach, partnerships require a much more nuanced approach, embracing the principles of a clear and open exchange of value, so that engagements may focus more upon the service than purely the solution, more upon lifetime value than the transactional worth. This alignment of value underpins the sustainability of the partnership and inspires an equity that engenders trust which in turn positively impacts customer value. Whilst some may see revenue as an inward-looking metric, it is highlighted just how important it is to pivot so that value is always qualified from an outside-in perspective. After all, value is only ever truly received, not given. It is how the customer sees, feels, and in some cases monetizes this value that builds long term success.

The report also highlights how the role of customer success also becomes central, as more of a cultural commitment across the entire business rather than the front-end execution capability that it has traditionally been. It forms the lens through which all key business, product, process and organisational

decisions are made, and it is brought to life through the effective empowerment of employees across the business.

## Transitioning to Revenue Enablement

As the report unfolds, it becomes clear that the transition to a Revenue Enablement model necessitates much more than a simple change in posture - it requires a cultural shift and strong leadership from the C Suite down. The practical, organisational, and financial hurdles underscored in the report serve as a reality check, demanding thoughtful consideration and strategic planning. A committed journey to Revenue Enablement should not be undertaken lightly nor selectively. It requires company commitment, consistency of execution and the courage to see it through.

In summary, this report serves as a valuable route planner for organisations navigating the confusing pathways to Revenue Enablement. Whilst the challenges are real, there is both a need and an understanding that such change is required. The spoils will go to those who have the courage to change, the strength of leadership to make it happen, the ability to foster a collaborative and empowered culture, and the insight to align meaningful KPIs and reward systems. This will be a

journey of continual education, adaptation and refinement, fueled by increasing insight from emerging technologies, but it promises to be well worth the cost of change.



**Richard Roberts**

Experienced Executive Leader,  
Global Vendors

Richard, as part of the executive and senior leadership teams, has led several well-known regional and global technology vendors. Richard has delivered exceptional growth and market share gains in times of uncertainty and intense competition and is experienced in leading direct and indirect go-to-market strategies.

## Introduction

B2B buying practices have changed considerably over recent years, and are impacting B2B technology buyers significantly. There are an increasing number of touch points before a deal is closed—Foundry’s ‘Role and Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker Study 2023’<sup>1</sup> showed that purchases typically now involve 25 people, with buying committees of 28 individuals for cloud computing solutions.

We already know that buyers research their options online before engaging the services of salespeople, as a result they may only spend **17%** of their purchase cycle time with potential suppliers—even less time for the individual suppliers. It’s clearly vital to make the sales process as efficient and effective as possible. And one way to achieve improved performance is by viewing the organisation through a wider lens, removing silos and replacing standard sales enablement with a revenue enablement model.

The definition of ‘revenue enablement’ used for the purposes of this study is from Gartner<sup>3</sup>, and offers three main advantages:



### Consistency

All customer-facing roles leverage consistent customer messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions that reduce friction in traditional handoffs between functions.



### Alignment

Marketing, sales, and customer success work together to improve end-to-end revenue generation. They either collaborate cross-functionally on efforts that support the entire customer buying journey or come together under one revenue enablement function.



### Visibility

There’s visibility throughout the customer buying journey, making it easier to optimise enablement efforts to improve revenue.

Source: Gartner





They report that organisations prioritising a revenue enablement strategy are **80%** more likely to exceed their revenue growth targets<sup>4</sup>, which is clearly an attractive proposition.

With **60%** of enablement functions (i.e. teams that provide training and content on new products and services) expected to support all client-facing, revenue-generating roles by 2026<sup>5</sup>, this will involve a significant investment of time and resources. Is the technology sector on track to meet these enablement expectations, and do they want to?

We wanted to investigate the current situation within the IT industry to see what the reality currently is, and where things are headed in the future. Is 'revenue enablement' a term and model people are familiar with, and what value could it add to their

businesses? What are the organisational and commercial challenges it can solve, and are there barriers to its adoption?

Our research included interviews and an online survey of almost **70** senior leaders in the technology industry, with responsibility for either overall strategy, sales, marketing or enablement in both direct and in-direct go-to-market channels. Here, we share our findings, with real-life experiences and observations about technology sales and enablement, and practical tips to improve processes and revenue from a buyer-led perspective.

We hope you find the results interesting and useful, and welcome any comments arising from the information presented here.



More likely to exceed their revenue growth targets.



Of enablement functions expected to support all revenue generating roles by 2026.



Senior leaders in the technology industry

## Profile of the authors and interviewers:

### Charlotte Graham-Cumming

CEO

Charlotte has worked in the technology sector for more than 25 years, both in the UK and globally, providing strategic marketing advice to B2B brands. Charlotte's specialism is to help brands put the buyer at the heart of their strategy – whether it's how best to go to market, articulate the value proposition or understand the psychology of the buyer mindset.



### Francesca Beddow

Director

Francesca has over 20 years experience working with clients in the technology sector to build effective enablement strategies and programs for direct and indirect sales channels, delivering global revenue and profit growth.



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Revenue Enablement presents an exciting opportunity for organisations, providing a win-win for both the customer and the organisation adopting it. The model is based on placing the customer at the heart of what you do, allowing the organisation to create synergies to enhance the customer experience and customer lifecycle value.

Francesca Beddow,  
Director, Ice Blue Sky Ltd.

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## Executive Summary

In terms of awareness of the term Revenue Enablement, it seemed fairly evenly split across audiences, with **47%** not being familiar, although they could obviously guess what it was driving at. Some respondents commented that revenue itself is an inward looking term, and is it even appropriate for an approach so heavily focused on the customer?

Unsurprisingly Revenue Enablement is a term still open to interpretation, and it remains to be seen as to whether or not it will be widely adopted, or if it will be adopted in a way that matches the original intent.

What is clear is that there is a strong need for cohesiveness in the buying journey and beyond, with 1 in 5 respondents citing a lack of a cohesive customer journey within their organisation. All recognised that the buying journey is increasingly challenging and difficult to predict, involving many more stakeholders and the linear B2B process as we knew it no longer exists. Customers drive demand, not vendors.

Revenue was acknowledged as complex to manage, particularly in SaaS scenarios, and has a strong reliance on customer success roles, so the need for an holistic view was emphasised by respondents. Generally

partners are seen as crucial to success - more so now than ever, but require more enablement than they have received in the past, and more tailored approaches.

Respondents stated consistently that revenue enablement has multiple drivers, primarily centred around improving the customer experience and outcomes by removing friction and unlocking end to end visibility, thus increasing retention and customer lifetime value. These all featured much higher than concerns around cost or operational streamlining.

Most respondents are moving towards the adoption of a revenue enablement model in its truest sense, with the need to increase alignment and end-to-end visibility across the customer journey through the consideration of a CRO role or organisational changes being the most common priority, along with cross functional OKRs, but all appreciated it was very early days.

Continuing this theme, while there is a lot of positivity about the adoption of this model, it seems most favour a phased approach, and that education of the buyer will need to be a priority, particularly in terms of understanding the value of the experience they can expect.

We saw that respondents understand that revenue enablement has the potential to create clear differentiation from the competition, e.g:



Showing the customer that different parts of your business work seamlessly together to deliver a better experience and outcome - such as coordinating renewals that align to the customer behaviour and outcomes in the initial phase.



Involving customer success teams results in different questions being asked during the revenue enablement definition phase, which may reveal varied and improved KPIs to focus on, leading to a more attractive commercial offer and increased customer satisfaction from buyer aligned offerings.



Knowing the potential total lifetime value of a customer gives the flexibility to make offers which are more commercially competitive up front and deliver increased long-term commercial stability.



An end-to-end view of the revenue generation process enables all teams to work together to devise a powerful package that avoids playing to a competitor's strengths, in areas such as pricing, implementation and overall delivered value.



A common sentiment among the respondents was that a revenue enablement approach would demonstrate and facilitate a keenness around the entire relationship with the customer and not just the sale. Churn was a popular topic, as well as adding commission to customer success team plans in order to drive a more coordinated and commercial approach to customers.



There was also a common understanding of the benefit to buyer and seller alike of a coordinated, fully visible, end to end revenue cycle. This is perhaps no surprise, but many respondents felt reassured by the feasibility of such an approach to solve a problem that has been around for some time.



# Sales & Marketing Alignment

The challenges here remain similar to those that we've seen over the last five to ten years; while there may be general collaboration, true alignment is inconsistent.

Unsurprisingly, there was consensus that this needs to come from the C Suite in order to be both effective and practical, having consistency in reward structures and KPIs being one popular example.

These findings dovetail well into the challenges that were experienced with the overall approach of revenue enablement, and again, no real surprises emerged. Success requires a solid and common understanding of the concept, a shift in culture and strong leadership.

When asked about what could assist businesses during the transition to this model, almost all respondents favoured an approach of using a third party as a moderator to share better ways of working, and to avoid the pain of trial and error.

Targeted ABM campaigns were seen as a favoured method for piloting the approach, specifically in order to demonstrate how it can improve revenue streams through the alignment of sales and marketing across the customer journey for targeted customer groups, and enabling a consistent approach in messaging to remove friction and customer uncertainty .

In summary, the appetite is there, but there are a number of practical, cultural and financial hurdles that need to be overcome.

It's clear that what will set apart the leaders from the laggards will be:



Strong leadership and sponsorship from the C Suite



A phased approach that balances quick wins against long term goals and alignment



An alignment of cross functional KPIs and commission plans



Education aimed at buyers to demonstrate the benefits of such an approach



A collaborative culture and mindset



Clear business reporting demonstrating the positive strategic, commercial and customer outcomes

It will be interesting to see longer term who is successful, and what methods were employed in order to achieve that success. What's clear is that the technology sector requires things to change urgently, in response to a drastically changed buyer landscape.

This report contains more detail around the responses and trends that we have seen, as well as detailed recommendations on how to move forward, given the current landscape.



## 1 Our Findings

### 1.1 How well is the 'revenue enablement' model understood in the technology industry?

The in-depth interviews revealed that the term 'revenue enablement' is still not widely understood among senior B2B professionals in the technology sector, with **47%** confirming that they hadn't heard the term before. A further interviewee felt it's not currently a well-used term, explaining that "Any term can be misinterpreted...until it's an absolutely industry standard term." Another suggested that the term 'revenue enablement' is misleading because they view 'revenue' as an inward-looking term, whereas this model is more about customer outcomes with the revenue being more of a by-product.

For this reason, the interviewers clarified the working definition of 'revenue enablement' for this research with each interviewee prior to continuing with their conversation.

Against this backdrop, it's perhaps unsurprising that **1 in 5** of our survey respondents reported that their business lacks end-to-end visibility of the customer journey, with siloed sales, marketing, and customer success functions.

## 1.2 What do senior business leaders think is driving the consolidated model?

Some of the key drivers were seen to be changes to customer requirements such as cloud computing and XaaS and their effect on the revenue model, and operational challenges around fragmentation and silos.

Participants noted how technology sales have changed over the years, and how revenue models have changed with the shift to cloud computing, where instead of a large initial payment with upgrade costs every few years, revenue is now spread across the lifecycle. This creates its own challenges, not least because, as one interviewee noted, it can take as much effort if not more, to sell a cloud solution than a perpetual license, and without the additional upfront revenue from customisations.

Traditionally, enablement has focused on sales. But particularly for XaaS products, the lifecycle of the customer relationship extends beyond sales, and there can be a disconnect between sales and post-sales revenue if customers aren't consuming the product they've ordered.

“

Productivity and distribution of costs across the business, without a bearing on revenue enablement, leads to self-sustaining silos that fundamentally undermine the brand experience of our customers.

We need to review the organisation from root to branch to ensure appropriate alignment, investment, and role definitions, to optimise revenue.

Executive Leader,  
Global Vendor

”

The complexity of the tech channel industry combined with the movement away from a linear B2B purchase process are key factors in the drive towards a consolidated model. As one interviewee pointed out, when sales were driven around vendor demand, vendors would find MDFs for marketing campaigns with linear KPIs, and there was an inward focus right down the channel - the customer “had a shiny new widget, but it is creating a better outcome for them?” Everything was siloed. Now, with the ‘everything as a service’ model, the end customer drives demand.

Within the new ecosystem of partners, there's a need to align KPIs and align customer outcome. But who is responsible for the relationship with the customer? “You still need an owner, you still need somebody to provide that commitment, that ownership, and that seal of approval.”

Enablement of partners is essential. One participant noted that if you haven't thought about how you'll enable your partner to drive revenue—rather than just sales and technical enablement—don't be surprised if at year end your revenue isn't where you'd expected. They also pointed out that where ROI isn't seen, it's typically down to process - it can be something as fundamental as the partner not knowing how to raise a purchase order, which then delays the whole process.

Choosing the right partners is also crucial. An interviewee advised, “You've got to pick the partner for whom selling your product is actually something they want and are able to do”, which means profiling and understanding which partners you can work with to generate a revenue stream is key.

# Main drivers for implementing revenue enablement

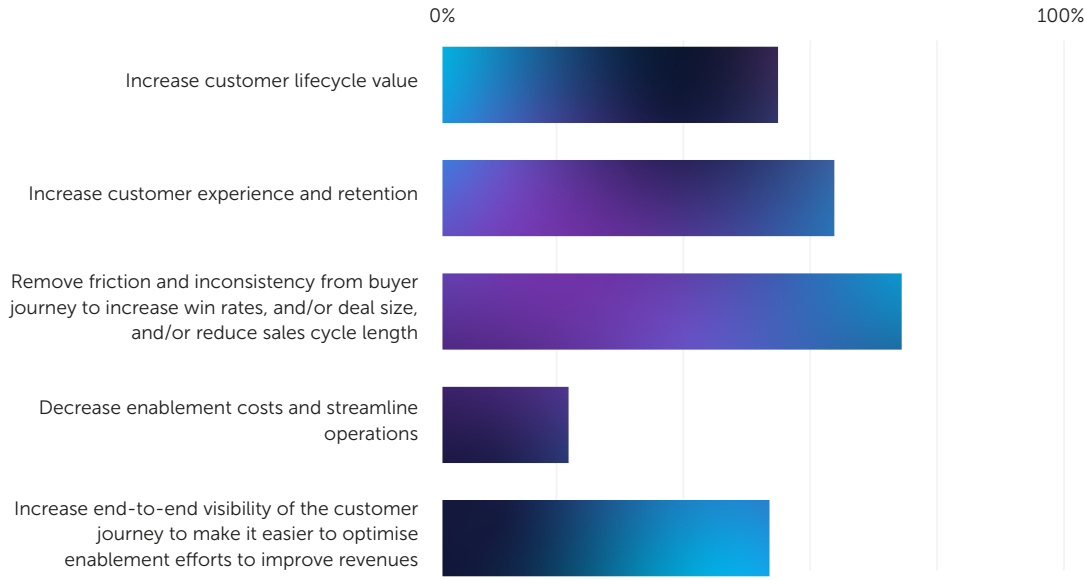


Figure 1. Main drivers for implementing revenue enablement (from responses to survey question 6; Appendix C)

Almost three-quarters of survey respondents (72%) could see more than one main driver for implementing revenue enablement. The driver "remove friction and inconsistency from buyer journey to increase win rates, and/or deal size, and/or reduce sales cycle length" was selected by 70% of respondents. 60% felt a main driver would be to "increase customer experience and retention", and around half chose an "increase in customer lifecycle value" or an increase in "end-to-end visibility of the customer journey to make it easier to optimise enablement efforts" (51% and 49% respectively). Less than a fifth (19%) saw its role in decreasing enablement costs and streamlining operations as a main driver.



### 1.3 Are many businesses already adopting, or taking steps towards adopting, this model?

Almost three-quarters of survey respondents (74%) could envisage revenue enablement models in the technology industry, with a further 8% thinking some version of it could be at least partially implemented.

### Do you see revenue enablement models being implemented within in the technology industry?

Figure 2. Implementation of revenue enablement models in the technology industry (from responses to survey question 8; Appendix C)



Full adoption of revenue enablement models was rare amongst interviewees and survey participants, but steps in the direction of revenue enablement, particularly around team alignment, were being actioned by several respondents. Other key actions included restructuring leadership teams to include a CRO (Chief Revenue Officer) and adopting an OKR (Objectives & Key Results) structure aligning the goals of functional teams. Having all teams use the same tool, with their own dashboards through which they can access the same content was also a way of helping to break down silos.

It was acknowledged in the interviews that pressure to adopt a revenue enablement model could come from how competitive the market is, as there is an opportunity to increase share and profitability by eliminating friction and improving efficiency.

“

We need to become truly externally focused on everything we do. It's not about how great we are or our products, but rather about how customers employ our capabilities to achieve an outcome.

To do this we need to remove the friction and potential silos that exist across the various organizations

Americas Sales Leader, Global Telecommunications Organisation

”

## 1.4 Is it feasible to implement a revenue enablement approach?

Survey respondents were very positive about the possibility of implementing a revenue enablement model. **42%** felt it would need to be implemented using a phased approach over a **1 to 3** year period, with **6%** feeling it could work in some circumstances with some caveats, such as having the correct senior buy-in from the start, and the need for a shift in mindset.

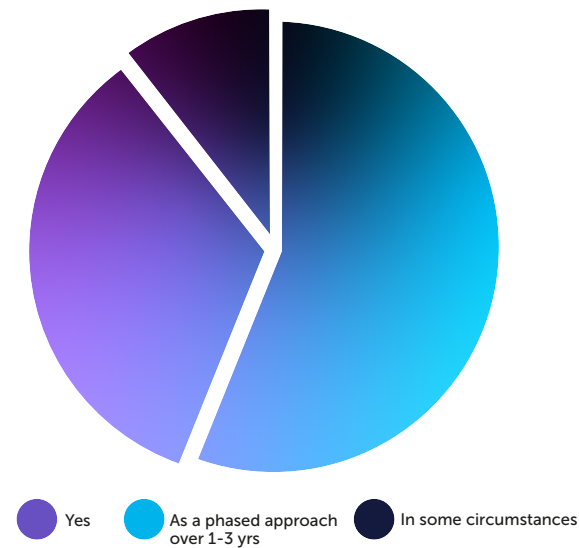


Figure 3. The perceived possibility of implementing a revenue enablement model (from responses to survey question 10; Appendix C)

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The challenges facing an organisation when implementing a Revenue Enablement Model, include stakeholder alignment, system and workflow integration, activation and reporting on impact.

CMO, SaaS Vendor

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One interviewee pointed out that in order to adopt the revenue enablement model successfully, it would be necessary to shift mindsets right at the start of the customer journey, to “build the perception in the customer’s mind that they’re going to choose in a different way, buy in a different way, consume services and capabilities in a different way—set this perception from the very first contact point, don’t try and bolt it on towards the end.” This would involve realigning sales pitches, processes, and compensation structure around this model.

## 1.5 What commercial challenges could the revenue enablement model solve?

Revenue enablement addresses commercial challenges by joining everything up and getting everyone invested in it, to create a **smoother internal process** that will **speed up the customer journey**.

One respondent explained it should enable more visibility of the behaviour and performance that frontline managers require, providing “the tools and processes in place to do better, more profitable deals”, as well as facilitating proactive resourcing requests and capacity planning, instead of emergency scrambles at the end of reporting periods.

### Core advantages:



Consistency



Alignment



Visibility

Revenue enablement also has potential to create **clear differentiation from the competition**, in various ways:



By showing the customer that different parts of your business work seamlessly together to deliver a better customer experience and outcome.



Involving customer success representatives earlier in the sales cycle could result in different questions being asked, revealing a different set of KPIs which could help package a more attractive commercial offer.



Looking at the total lifetime value of a customer gives businesses the flexibility to make offers which are more commercially competitive up front and deliver increased long-term commercial stability.



having an end-to-end view enables a powerful package to be offered that doesn't play to a competitor's strengths, e.g. price, as all the teams work together rather than leaving it to one salesperson to work out on their own.

Unlocking revenue faster and more predictably is a benefit.

An important challenge identified is the reduction of churn. Customers choosing to cancel or not to renew subscriptions can occur for various reasons, including the strength of the relationship and how businesses reward their teams. One interviewee commented that their sales team has goals and commission for new sales and upselling, but their customer success team doesn't have a commission plan. A survey respondent also suggested that this approach would facilitate a clear definition of quota compensation between sales, marketing, and customer success.

“

“Our biggest challenge is non-renewals which can be product performance issue but more likely is a customer adoption challenge, which revenue enablement can solve”.

Global Sales Enablement Leader,  
Global Vendor

”

Other participants noted that the revenue enablement model creates an end-to-end customer journey, and that it provides the customer with visibility and reassurance that their investment will deliver its intended outcome, with accountability from the partnership.

One interviewee commented that while the job role 'Chief Revenue Officer' sounds very sales-focused, and the model takes a selfish perspective—revenue to us—the ultimate output is the customer having a better experience because the solution will be right first time. In addition, the narrative for the customer takes the form of an ongoing life story rather than 'what can we do for you right now'?

To quote one of our participants, "It moves you from being a transactional type of organisation to truly speaking about, 'I care about the relationship with you, not just the sale'."

“

“We need to stop focusing on ourselves and trying to differentiate capabilities and become externally and customer obsessed. That is, drive conversations that speak to the needs of the business, develop marketing materials that focus on outcomes and Customer Success, not products and capabilities. Revenue Enablement is a vehicle to do this”.

Sales Leader,  
Services Provider

”







Figure 4. Word cloud responses to survey question 7 (Appendix C): What commercial challenges do you think a revenue enablement approach will solve?

[note: this word cloud is an approximation, as it includes the responses of the 4 non-qualified responses, 2 of whom had used the word 'customer'. The percentage in the text has been recalculated to omit these].

It is perhaps not surprising that our survey revealed the most frequently used word in respondents' answers to the question of commercial challenges was "customer". However, while **42%** of respondents referred to the word "customer" in their survey response, this greatly oversimplifies

the range of replies given. Detailed answers ranged from better understanding of customer behaviour across the entire sales cycle to identify pain points that add friction to a purchase, to reducing inconsistency in the customer journey across territories, to segmentation of customer types requiring different strategies. Related responses that didn't specifically use the word 'customer' included improving buyer confidence thus shortening the buying cycle, and better management of client data.

## 1.6

### How does alignment of sales and marketing generate change?



#### (a) Fragmentation creates natural barriers

For effective collaboration, it's essential to have sufficient knowledge of what others are doing. It was mentioned that when companies grow, they can become more siloed. Several interviewees discussed experiencing cultural differences between sales and marketing teams, with one acknowledging it as a "great divide" with "some people that are very derogatory about each other in either side", before noting that revenue acceleration "really starts with the people, and how people interact with each other". Another described their experiences from various organisations of go-to-market and marketing alignment, "There's always complaints, misalignment, and our marketing function and our go-to-market are different. Marketing is not part of go-to-market organisation if you think about reporting lines, so immediately creates some sort of separation."

In addition to problems experienced when sales and marketing are not aligned, customer success was also often seen in its own silo, to the degree that one person expressed that "they're not as hungry as we are, and don't push existing customers for referrals". Breaking down silos was viewed by multiple survey respondents as a key commercial challenge that revenue enablement could solve.

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“Revenue Enablement will definitely help to understand better how our customers behave across the entire sales cycle, allowing us to identify those pain points that might be adding friction to the purchase”.

Sales Leader,  
Worldwide Leading IT Vendor

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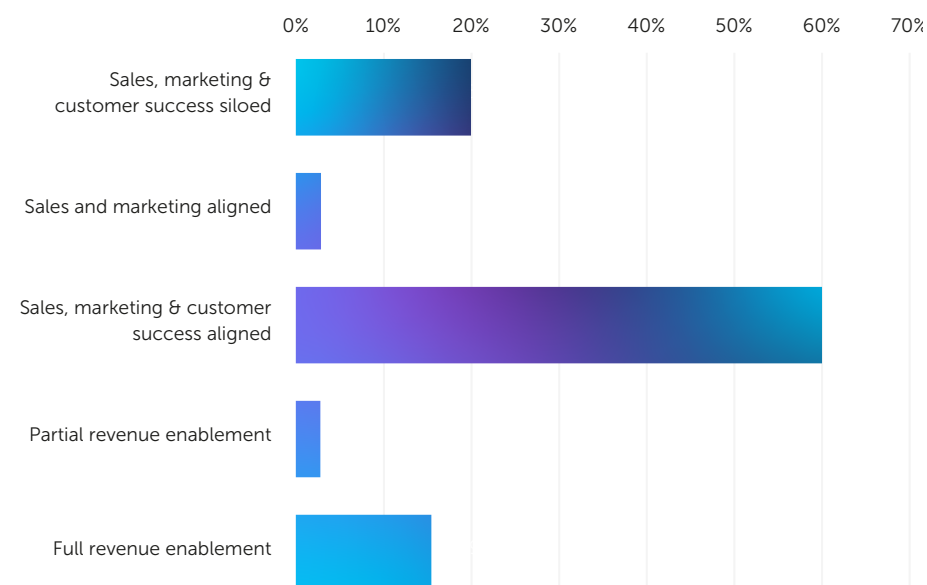
### (b) The current picture

Most survey respondents (**60%**) said their Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success, although separate, had a good degree of alignment<sup>1\*</sup>. However, for **21%** of respondents, they operated as siloed functions, so the customer journey lacked end-to-end visibility. Just **15%** of respondents already had a revenue enablement function with clear alignment across these three functions and a clear executive owner.

In addition to problems experienced when sales and marketing are not aligned, customer success was also often seen in its own silo, to the degree that one person expressed that “they’re not as hungry as we are, and don’t push existing customers for referrals”. Breaking down silos was viewed by multiple survey respondents as a key commercial challenge that revenue enablement could solve.

<sup>1\*</sup> Response: “We have separate sales, marketing and customer success functions but with a good degree of alignment and consistency across messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions that reduce friction in traditional handoffs between functions.”

Figure 5. **Percentage of respondents with different alignment models** (from responses to survey question 5; Appendix C).





### (c) Alignment from the top

Interview participants noted that a cultural problem with alignment can occur if sales and marketing are separate at executive level, although one interviewee explained that a strong constructive partnership does not have to mean a reporting relationship between the CRO and the CMO.

A tech professional described their own successful integration of sales and marketing, with marketing campaigns aligned to what sales teams hear from clients in the field, explaining they'd "joined them up at the hip very early on in the business" and that "marketing reports into the sales director". Another said that while "traditionally it's not easy to find a company where sales and marketing works seamlessly, flawlessly together", they were seeing some of data and tools were being used by marketing, so they were very much partners in an end-to-end, tool based, go-to-market based alignment.







#### (d) Commercial literacy, accountability, and trust

Educating people throughout the company in how their role impacts sales and revenue, described by one interviewee as “commercial literacy”, helps align teams and get them on the same page. Setting common goals and understanding responsibility and accountability are seen as key to alignment, as these help people feel more comfortable and creates consistency across priorities.

Trust is viewed as an important part of alignment, and it was suggested that getting sales and marketing people into the room together helps them get closer as human beings, strengthening their relationship through empathy and understanding. While it’s important to be clear on who’s accountable for what, thus being able to hold one another to account, finger pointing and blaming other teams over a failed deal are viewed as unhelpful, with the focus needing to be on “operational evolution over time, based on facts, not feelings”.





### (e) Tools and visibility

Fragmentation can also occur when teams use different tools. A lack of visibility of the end-to-end process leaves gaps in understanding, such as sales not seeing marketing tools that reveal which campaign has led to specific opportunities, or the customer success records that provide insight into the relative health of a customer relationship. Better visibility could lead to better deals, increased customer lifecycle value and stronger relationships.







#### (f) Room for improvement

Better alignment between sales and marketing could help reduce friction and prevent premature passing of leads. One interviewee felt that although their teams have some degree of alignment, marketing still typically passes too early.

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“The priority for our organisation in evolving to a revenue enablement model, would be increasing velocity of leads through the funnel, which would touch on both marketing and sales”.

President,  
Cybersecurity Reseller

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When teams are not aligned, it can be difficult to deliver on what the customer has been promised. A survey respondent felt that revenue enablement could help combat misunderstandings and incorrect customer expectations about the solution presented versus what is actually provided. An interviewee explained how they had previously closed deals by offering flexibility, but this made life difficult for customer success, as was it sales or marketing who had made the promise, and what exactly did it mean? A more integrated and collaborative solution had had to be devised.

However, it was also noted that healthy tension between sales and marketing can be a good thing, as when it works well, it can generate different ideas. This suggests that although alignment and common goals are generally a good thing, it's also important to avoid becoming an echo chamber, and instead use the different, yet aligned, perspectives from sales, marketing, and customer success, to drive new and exciting ideas and ways to improve performance, close better deals, and encourage healthy customer relationships.





### (g) Alignment with partners

The importance of alignment extends beyond internal teams, to partners. In order to streamline the process, some participants provide joined-up partner enablement, giving them access to the same marketing materials that the internal team have, for consistency of message. However, partnership does add a level of complexity to address—as expressed by one professional, “Partners are an extension of our sales force. I get the sensitivity because we know that partners deal with competitors. So, there’s this kind of trust issue, of a paradigm to be dealt with. But I don’t see scale, systemic information sharing”. They went on to explain how resources can be wasted by duplicated effort, and that there can be unintentional as well as intentional competition going on, which they felt highlighted the importance of understanding the customer journey and having visibility across companies.





## 1.7 What are the challenges with implementing a revenue enablement model?

For successful implementation, it's essential to address some of the main obstacles that may be encountered:



### (a) Understanding the concept

An initial challenge will be to ensure the concept of revenue enablement is understood across the company. Our study has shown that it is not currently well known in the technology sector, so to quote one of our interviewees, "there would need to be an education and evangelisation effort to get everyone on board, starting with the CEO."



### (b) Company culture

This was identified as a key challenge for implementing revenue enablement. In some instances, the reasons relate to individuals—such as "helping people at a senior level to understand the dynamic between different functions", for which it was suggested education might enable businesses to overcome "the entrenched view of what executives of a certain age think marketing does".



### (c) Leadership

It's important to get the right leader who understands the benefits of the model, and to ensure there is not a lack of alignment across the leadership team. Breaking down silos could be more challenging for larger organisations, with smaller organisations potentially having an opportunity to leverage their agility and gain advantage. In larger organisations, there can also be a disconnect where the marketing team is managed and budgeted from a different geolocation than sales and customer experience teams.

“

“There needs to be a cash-flow plan to achieve what is needed, a roadmap to bring the various stakeholders into alignment, and clarity of purpose, messaging and behavioural execution from the top of the business. This is not a ‘project’, it’s a transformation and the whole business needs to understand their role within it”.

”

Experienced C-Suite Leader  
(Global Vendor)



#### (d) Removing silos

While silos were acknowledged to cause disconnect between teams, actually removing them was expected to be difficult. The word cloud below indicates some of the main concerns of survey respondents.

While **13%** of survey respondents used the actual term ‘silo’, many others talked about alignment between business functions, departments, and teams, so the issue of fragmentation was seen to be very significant.

Figure 6. Word cloud responses to survey question 9 (Appendix C): What do you think are the main challenges in implementing a revenue enablement model?





### (e) Business process revision

Business processes may need some serious work when adopting a new enablement model, particularly where businesses have grown up organically and inorganically, so tech on its own can't fix the underlying flaws. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a "structured revenue enablement work stream within your senior leadership business—a tangible core business initiative that is tracked and monitored."



### (f) Change management

This is seen as a major challenge. It was pointed out that while you can run a training course or send out a communication, the difficulty is making that behaviour change happen and stick when things are moving fast: "It's people, it's tools, it's processes—it's not just communicating, it's certainly not just putting on a training course and hoping for the best".



### (g) Finding the time

Probably one of the biggest barriers to implementing revenue enablement is just being able to find the time to address such a fundamental change. As one interviewee expressed it, "People are kind of busy, and there's a lot going on, and where does this stack rank as a priority? The answer to that should lie in the business case."



"A better customer experience is the key driver - the customer must be the centre of all initiatives. The main commercial challenge will be aligning the priorities and budgets of all functions into a single funded project, and getting multiple stakeholders aligned".



Sales Director,  
Global Vendor

## 1.8 What help could assist businesses transitioning to a revenue enablement model?

When it comes to organisational changes, it was cited by a large number of research participants that it would be beneficial for a 3rd party to take a moderator role to help teams communicate with each other or to teach better ways of working, sharing models and examples of successful and unsuccessful transitions from other organisations.

A third of survey research participants stated that help was needed in the alignment and goaling of the organisation, as well as organisational wide enablement and education to successfully transition to the model.

For improving the revenue stream, the most frequently mentioned solution was targeted Account Based Marketing (ABM) activity, using a professional ABM agency working in close alignment with internal sales or business development for more efficient targeting and engagement, and can be a useful initial pilot project approach to prove the revenue enablement model.



Figure 7. Word cloud responses to survey question 11 (Appendix C): What help do you think your and/or other organisations need to be able to transition to a revenue enablement model?

“

“To transition to a revenue enablement model, we would require help with education - understanding on why this is important, what the value is to the business”

Channel Leader,  
Global Vendor

”



## 2. Recommendations for practical deployment



The revenue enablement model described by Gartner and outlined at the start of this report, once implemented, should provide advantages in 3 areas: consistency, alignment, and visibility<sup>3</sup>.

It is clear from our research that these benefits are seen as highly desirable in order to drive business success—but it is also clear that the reason the model provides these advantages is because a lot of change and work needs to be put in to realise them.

As previously discussed, the initiative has to be owned by the executive level, preferably with a Chief Revenue Officer at the helm, who has an expansive experience across sales and marketing, and possibly customer experience.

If we acknowledge the challenges in deploying such a comprehensive change in the organisation, including a shift in culture, an alignment of KPIs and compensation and strong leadership, what is the practical route to change?

A phased approach is certainly the most practical way to begin, and we have seen that a two folded phased approach works best; when you phase both the overall changes, and the customer/prospect groups that you deploy them into. This has the combined benefits of managing change at a practical scale, and learning lessons early on about what you don't know/weren't expecting.

We saw this reflected in the responses of the survey respondents, who recognised that they needed help in where to focus first to deliver high value, and to help avoid some of the pitfalls that occur from doing this for the first time.

There are three main advantages to transitions to a revenue enablement model



Consistency

All customer-facing roles leverage consistent customer messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions that reduce friction in traditional handoffs between functions.



Alignment

Marketing, sales, and customer success work together to improve end-to-end revenue generation. They either collaborate cross-functionally on efforts that support the entire customer buying journey or come together under one revenue enablement function.



Visibility

There's visibility throughout the customer buying journey, making it easier to optimise enablement efforts to improve revenue.

Source: Gartner

Analysis and changes are needed over a number of core areas including:



Organisational and team structure, including goaling and reward/compensation schemes.



Systems and tools used by the various teams



Cross Functional Processes and data



Customer journey and lifecycle



Enablement of sales and partners

It is important the goals and benefits to the customer of revenue enablement, as well as the commercial benefits, are used as a guiding light in both achieving the mindset shift and buy-in needed across the organisation, and in creating the business case and multifaceted, phased plan to evolve the organisation to a revenue enablement model.

The size of the mindset change shouldn't be underestimated as for revenue enablement to be successful sales, marketing, and customer success need to be aligned seamlessly to support the entire customer journey. This requires a different way of working together as functions or new extended teams, with shared priorities and metrics. Therefore, continued reinforcement of new working practices and investment in creating a collaborative culture is a must

“

The study consisted of **65+ business leaders** and senior B2B sales, marketing, and sales enablement professionals from vendors and partners in the technology sector. This provided us with huge insight into the adoption and commercial benefits of how revenue enablement can help organisations.

”

Francesca Beddow,  
Director, Ice Blue Sky Ltd.

## Articulating the revenue enablement success model

Our study has highlighted several important considerations for organisations moving to a revenue enablement model. To maximise the usefulness of our survey and interview results, we have converted these learnings into actionable steps that organisations can follow for successful transition to their own tailor-made revenue enablement model.

For a full transition to revenue enablement, each step will be completed in its entirety, but in practice, many businesses may choose a more gradual evolution with incremental changes to processes, organisation, and tools over a longer period, to allow teams to adjust to the necessary cultural changes.

Once the six steps have been followed and the recommendations actioned, review and repeat the cycle stages either as part of a scheduled review cycle, or when internal or external circumstances change significantly.

Access these six steps as a helpful checklist [here](#).

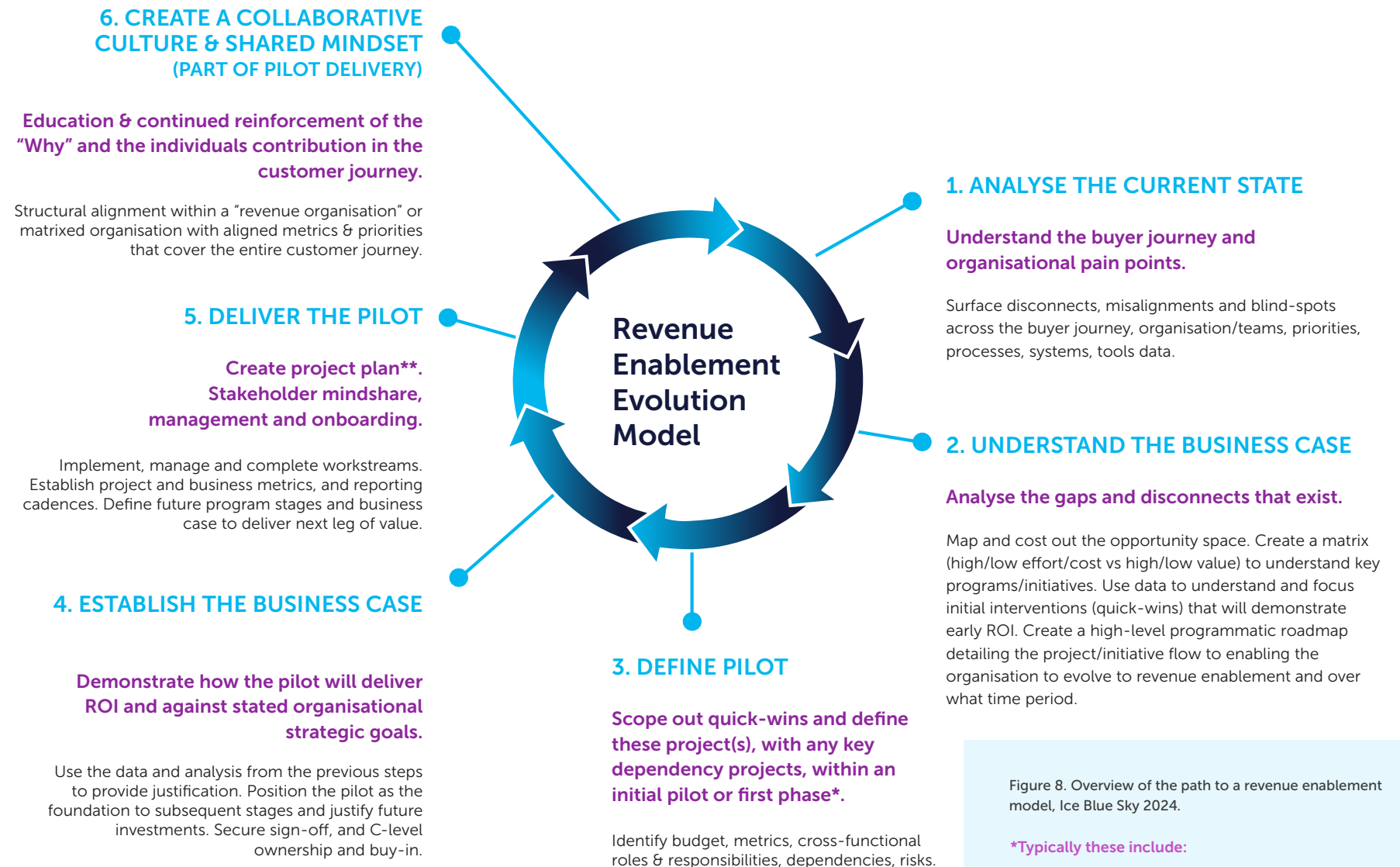


Figure 8. Overview of the path to a revenue enablement model, Ice Blue Sky 2024.

**\*Typically these include:**

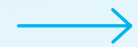
- Aligning all enablement functions to support all revenue generating functions.
- Ensuring tools/systems to gain visibility/required data.
- Removing friction and optimising the customer journey; aligning sales, marketing and customer success and removing disconnects.

**\*\*Typical pilot projects aligned with strategic objectives include:**

- Delivery of a combined sales and marketing approach inc. ABM, Buyer-led campaigns with aligned sales enablement,
- Customer success enablement, New processes inc. to align and optimise cross functional engagement across customer lifecycle,
- New tools.



Appendix Section



# Appendix A: The Research Method

To get a current picture of the ways in which revenue enablement principles are being used for B2B in the technology sector, we took a two-part approach.

The first stage was qualitative, with the Directors of Ice Blue Sky conducting in-depth one-on-one interviews with 15 highly experienced senior B2B strategy, sales and marketing leaders from organisations across the tech sector including:

- Vendors
- Managed Service Providers
- Service Providers
- Service Integrators
- Professional Services
- Value-Added Resellers.

The second stage was a quantitative and qualitative online survey, with participants initially validated using their LinkedIn profile. For this report, the results from the 53 survey respondents who confirmed they had at least 8 years' experience in a senior role in B2B sales, and/or marketing, and/or sales enablement for a technology company are included.

## Research Participants by Function/ Primary Area of Responsibility

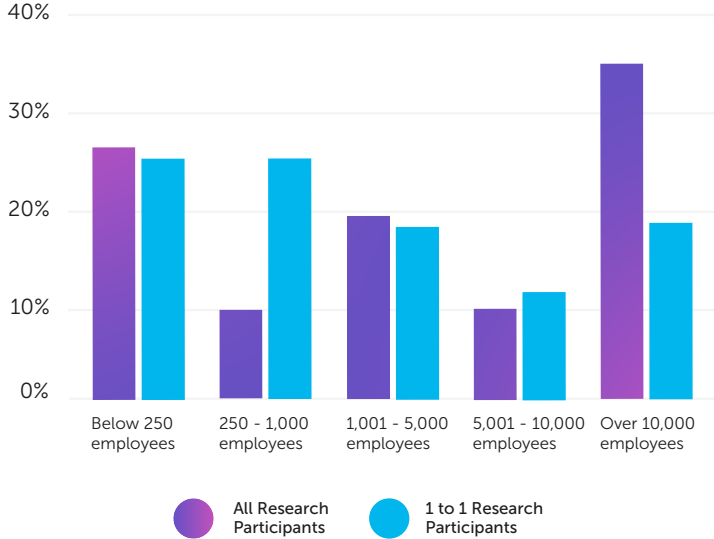


Figure 9. Research Participants by Area of Responsibility, Ice Blue Sky 2023.



Research participants represented both primary go-to-market models, with a third of all research participants being responsible for both direct and in-direct routes-to-market.

## Research Participants by GTM Channel Responsibility

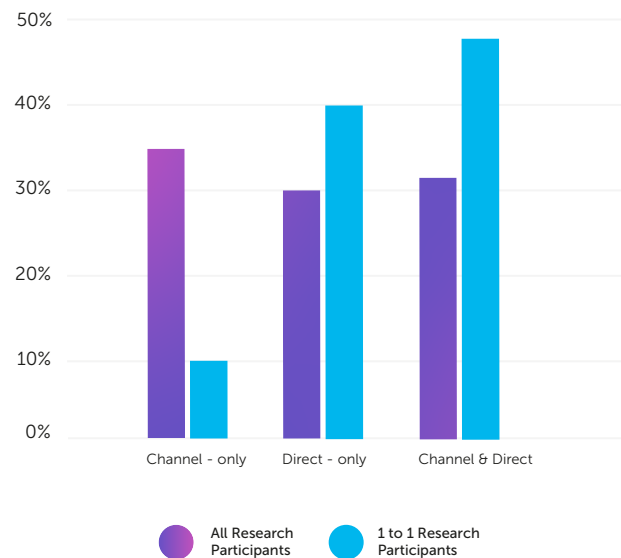


Figure 10. Research Participants by GTM Channel Responsibility, Ice Blue Sky 2023.

The research also ensured that the participant represented the full spectrum of organisational sizes, with the qualitative interviews providing a fairly equal spread across these. This was an important aspect to ensure that business complexity and maturity was considered as part of the findings.

## All Research Participants and 1-to-1 Interview Research Participants



Figure 11. All Research Participants by Organisational Size, Ice Blue Sky 2023.

The **15** qualitative interviews were conducted via online video conferencing, with the exception of one face-to-face conversation, from 04 September to 13 October 2023. The online surveys were completed between 16 October and 06 November 2023 inclusive.

Survey respondent profiles, one-to-one Interview questions and online survey questions are detailed in the appendices. The majority of participants are UK/EMEA based, but answers were also supplied from the US and APJC regions.

# Appendix B: Participant respondent profiles



### Organisation type

The breakdown of participants' organisation type was broadly the same for the whole study as for the 1-2-1 interviewees, with just under two-thirds from vendors, and the majority of the rest being from Value Added Resellers, service providers, service integrators and professional services companies. The remainder provided managed services.

Note: Two interviewees responded with two categories, with one giving answers relating to experience in two different organisations; four survey respondents did not answer this question.



### Size of organisation

**45%** of participants had over 5,001 employees and a further 30% had between 250 and 5000 employees, with a quarter having fewer than 250 employees. For the 1-2-1 interviewees, **31%** were from organisations with with more than 5,001 employees and **44%** with 250 to 5000 employees.

Note: total is greater than number of respondents, as one interviewee talked



### Professional background

Over half of survey respondents (**57%**) described their professional background as purely Sales, **30%** had a background in either Sales Enablement or a blend of Sales and Marketing, and the remaining **13%** had



● Sales ● Sales Enablement ● A blend of Sales & Marketing ● Marketing



### Areas of responsibility

Note: total is greater than number of respondents, as some gave >1 response.

## Appendix C: One-to-one interview questions

Please note: because of the conversational nature of interviews, question order was not always linear, depending on interviewee response.

### Interview Questions:

- What is your understanding of revenue enablement, and what do you think is driving this consolidated model?
- Are you seeing this model being adopted or steps towards it?
- What commercial challenges do you think a revenue enablement approach will solve?
- Do you think it's possible to implement this approach? In what circumstances/ organisations? What do you see as the challenges in working to this model?
- What steps have you seen taken to align sales and marketing, and the associated outcomes?
- Have you had any external help to achieve the model? What makes agency support attractive, and what type of activities would you go outside for?

## Definition of revenue enablement

(this was shared after interviewees had described their understanding of the term in question 1, to ensure alignment between interviewer and interviewee for the remainder of the conversation)

Revenue enablement is about improving workflows within all customer-facing functions in service of streamlining the purchase process. This includes ensuring those involved in the entire revenue life cycle have the training, content, and tools to be successful.



### Consistency

All customer-facing roles leverage consistent customer messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions that reduce friction in traditional handoffs between functions.



### Alignment

Marketing, sales, and customer success work together to improve end-to-end revenue generation. They either collaborate cross-functionally on efforts that support the entire customer buying journey or come together under one revenue enablement function.



### Visibility

There's visibility throughout the customer buying journey, making it easier to optimise enablement efforts to improve revenue.

Source: Gartner

# Appendix D: Online survey questions

[insert a copy of the online survey questions - screenshots shown here for reference]

1. Name

2. What is the size of your organisation \*

- Below 250 employees
- 250 - 1,000 employees
- 1,001 - 5,000 employees
- 5,001 - 10,000 employees
- Over 10,000 employees

3. Do you work in a senior role in B2B sales, and/or marketing, and/or sales enablement for technology company for 8 years or more? \*

- Yes
- No

4. What is your professional background? \*

- Sales
- Marketing
- Sales Enablement
- A blend of sales and marketing

5. How would you describe your current revenue enablement set-up? \*

- We have a revenue enablement function, which has a clear exec owner, and have clear alignment across sales, marketing and customer success.
- We have separate sales, marketing and customer success functions but with a good degree of alignment and consistency across messaging, similar technology and data, and sales motions that reduce friction in traditional handoffs between functions.
- Sales, marketing and customer success operate as siloed functions and lack end-to-end visibility of the customer journey.
- Other

6. What do you see as the main drivers for implementing a revenue enablement model? (See revenue enablement description above) \*

- Increase customer lifecycle value
- Increase customer experience and retention
- Remove friction and inconsistency from buyer journey to increase win rates, and/or deal size, and/or reduce sales cycle length
- Decrease enablement costs and streamline operations
- Increase end-to-end visibility of the customer journey to make it easier to optimise enablement efforts to improve revenues
- Other

7. What commercial challenges do you think a revenue enablement approach will solve? \*

8. Do you see revenue enablement models being implemented within the technology industry? \*

- Yes
- No
- Other

9. What do you think are the main challenges in implementing a revenue enablement model? \*

10. Do you think it is possible to implement a revenue enablement model? \*

- Yes
- No
- As a phased approach over 1 - 3 year period
- Other

11. What help do you think your and/or other organisations need to be able to transition to a revenue enablement model? \*

12. Lastly, how would you best describe your area of responsibility? \*

- Marketing (direct)
- Marketing (direct and channel partner)
- Sales (direct)
- Sales (channel partner)
- Regional / country leadership
- Other



## About Us

### Why we conducted the research

The B2B sales landscape has shifted enormously over the last five years, resulting in the buyer journey touching many different functional areas of the business. Driven by a passion for helping and empowering our customers and the technology sector community, we wanted to discover if revenue enablement was a model that would help organisations truly align across the customer lifecycle to optimise revenue streams and better service the customer.

### Ice Blue Sky

For almost two decades, Ice.Blue.Sky has served our clients by helping them understand and engage their target markets. What inspires us is helping our clients articulate, reach and engage buyers in a way that is meaningful and leads to valued relationships.

We draw on our extensive experience in the technology sector and are fueled by our unique combination of strategic expertise and practical go to market execution to help clients such as Cisco, Brother, and CDW, form marketing and sales enablement strategies to deliver meaningful and impactful business growth.





## References

<sup>1</sup> <https://resources.foundryco.com/download/role-and-influence-white-paper>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gartner.co.uk/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/what-shifting-to-revenue-enablement-can-do-for-your-organization>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/trends/revenue-enablement-strategic-roadmap>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-05-17-how-revenue-enablement-helps-sales-organizations-exceed-performance-targets>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-mindsets-and-practices-of-excellent-ceos>

**Thank you.  
Danke.  
Arigato.**