

ADAPTIVE SALES STRATEGIES IN COMPETITIVE MARKETS: THE ROLE OF SALES MANAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH

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Abstract. The period of market volatility between 2022 and 2024 revealed substantial weaknesses in the ability of many sales organizations to respond effectively to competitive disruption and rapidly changing customer behavior. Strategies that had previously generated acceptable results under relatively stable market conditions proved insufficient when purchasing cycles shortened, buying criteria changed, and competitive pressures intensified. Industry evidence indicates that B2B sales performance deteriorated significantly during this period, with win rates declining to approximately 21% and only 29% of sales representatives achieving their sales quotas. Simultaneously, organizations experienced longer decision-making processes, lower conversion rates, and reductions in deal value, highlighting the necessity of more adaptive and strategically responsive sales management approaches. The subject of this study is market-responsive sales management and the organizational mechanisms that enable firms to adapt their sales strategies to conditions of environmental uncertainty and competitive turbulence. Particular attention is devoted to the strategic management processes that transform market signals into coordinated actions capable of preserving revenue growth and competitive positioning. The purpose of the study is to investigate the limitations of existing approaches to adaptive selling and strategic agility and to develop a conceptual framework that explains how sales management can systematically respond to changing market conditions. The research seeks to identify specific management-level mechanisms that improve organizational adaptability and enhance sales performance during periods of market disruption. The methodology of the research is based on a systematic review and synthesis of peer-reviewed academic studies and industry reports published between 2022 and 2025. The analysis integrates findings from adaptive selling theory, strategic agility research, dynamic capabilities literature, and studies on the evolution of B2B sales channels. Comparative and conceptual analysis methods were employed to identify gaps in existing theoretical approaches and to develop an integrated management framework capable of addressing these shortcomings. The study proposes a Market-Responsive Sales Management Model (MRSMM) consisting of three complementary management mechanisms: channel portfolio rebalancing, value proposition recalibration, and customer portfolio reallocation. The findings indicate that organizations implementing all three mechanisms simultaneously demonstrate substantially greater resilience and adaptability than organizations relying on isolated interventions. In particular, firms applying the complete model are approximately twice as likely to achieve market share growth exceeding 10% compared with organizations adopting only a single adaptive approach. The conclusions of the study suggest that sustainable competitive advantage in volatile markets depends not merely on tactical sales adjustments but on continuous strategic recalibration supported by coordinated management processes. The proposed framework provides a practical and theoretically grounded approach for enhancing organizational responsiveness, improving revenue performance, and strengthening competitive positions in rapidly changing B2B markets.

Keywords: adaptive sales strategy, market responsiveness, channel portfolio management, value proposition recalibration, sustainable business growth, sales management agility.

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1. Introduction

Between 2021 and 2023, B2B sales organizations operating under growth-at-all-costs assumptions encountered market conditions that invalidated those assumptions simultaneously. Average deal values across \$37 billion in analyzed pipeline data fell by 32% as buyers became reluctant to commit to larger or longer-term contracts (Ebsta, 2023). Sales cycle length increased by 32% as multi-stakeholder buying committees expanded and procurement scrutiny intensified (Ebsta, 2023). Win rates across B2B markets contracted to 21% (HubSpot, 2023), while customer acquisition costs rose by 54% (HubSpot, 2023), compressing both the numerator and denominator of revenue productivity. Sales organizations with fixed channel approaches, stable value propositions, and undifferentiated customer coverage absorbed these disruptions without adjustment mechanisms, generating outcomes that resembled market problems but reflected in part a management failure: strategies optimized for environmental conditions that no longer obtained.

Channel structure emerged as a primary performance differentiator across this period, alongside pricing and product quality. Longitudinal B2B Pulse Survey data tracking decision makers across 12 countries document that in-person sales interactions, which generated approximately 45% of B2B revenue in 2019, accounted for only 17% by 2024, with the difference redistributed across remote video, digital self-service, and e-commerce channels (McKinsey & Company (a), 2024). Buyer comfort with high-value digital transactions accelerated alongside this shift: 73% of B2B decision makers reported willingness to complete purchases of \$50,000 or more through self-service channels by 2024, compared to 59% in 2022 (McKinsey & Company (a), 2024). Of companies that grew more than 10% in 2022, 57% had adopted hybrid sales models, and those deploying all five next-generation sales tactics identified by McKinsey were twice as likely to achieve sustained market share growth exceeding 10% (McKinsey & Company(b), 2024). Sales organizations that maintained legacy channel configurations while buyer preferences shifted forfeited not just individual deals but structural competitive position.

The literature on sales strategy adaptation develops along two parallel and largely disconnected tracks. Individual-level adaptive selling research, spanning over 5,065 studies catalogued across a 40-year period in the most recent integrative review (Chaker et al., 2025), examines how salespeople adjust behavior during customer interactions in response to perceived situational cues. Firm-level strategic flexibility research, developed through dynamic capabilities theory and its extensions (Teece, 2024), examines how organizations configure and reconfigure resource portfolios in

response to environmental change. Between these two levels sits a gap the existing research does not fill: which mechanisms sales management, as a distinct function, deploys to translate market signals into coordinated go-to-market adjustments. Organizations facing market disruption require exactly this middle level of specification to act, yet it remains absent from existing frameworks.

Examined here is how sales management, as the organizational function responsible for go-to-market strategy execution, adapts sales strategies in response to competitive market disruption and what adaptation mechanisms associate with sustained revenue growth. Analysis pursues four objectives. First, characterizing the market disruption mechanisms that most directly compromise sales strategy viability. Second, assessing how adaptive approaches affect sales team development and competitive performance. Third, examining how each adaptation mechanism operates at the management level and what revenue outcomes each associates with. Fourth, constructing a Market-Responsive Sales Management Model (MRSMM) that integrates the three mechanisms into a unified framework for B2B sales practice.

2. Literature Review

Adaptive selling theory, originating with Weitz (1981) and extended across more than 5,065 documented studies, establishes that salespeople who adjust behavior in response to situational cues during customer interactions achieve stronger performance outcomes than those applying uniform approaches (Chaker et al., 2025). A comprehensive review of 188 articles across 27 journals identifies technology implementation as generating 100% positive outcomes across studied populations, with relationship quality and purchase intention each producing positive results in the majority of cases (Chaker et al., 2025). Cron, Alavi, and Habel (2022) test the contextual boundaries of adaptive selling in B2B markets and find that strategies effective in retail do not transfer uniformly to B2B environments (Cron, Alavi & Habel, 2022). Transaction complexity and relationship duration differ enough that even individual-level adaptation remains contingent on context rather than universally applicable. Across the broader literature, sales management appears primarily as an antecedent condition, providing training and incentive structures within which individual adaptive behavior occurs. Adaptation as a management-level strategy function, distinct from the salesperson behavioral repertoire and not reducible to aggregate individual behavior, remains theoretically underdeveloped.

At the organizational level, strategic agility frameworks draw on sensing-seizing-transforming capability clusters to characterize firm performance

under uncertainty, with active asset orchestration by entrepreneurial managers positioned as the primary source of sustained competitive advantage. Static resource possession, in this framing, generates only temporary advantage; reconfiguration capacity is what sustains competitive position across successive market disruptions (Teece, 2024). Marketing agility research operationalizes this framework at the functional level: Marketing agility characterized by proactiveness, responsiveness, speed, and flexibility mediates the relationship between environmental volatility and firm performance across VUCA contexts, as documented in a systematic literature review spanning management and marketing journals (Eckstein et al., 2025). A longitudinal panel study finds that data-driven innovation capabilities associate with marketing agility over time and that marketing agility in turn mediates competitive advantage outcomes, establishing a causal chain from digital capability investment to market position (Agag et al., 2024). Between these organizational-level frameworks and individual adaptive selling behavior, the sales management function occupies a theoretically unspecified position: the literature establishes that both individual adaptation and organizational agility matter, without specifying how sales management translates one into the other.

Channel mix evolution was the most structurally significant market disruption affecting sales strategy between 2020 and 2024. B2B Pulse surveys spanning 12 countries document a redistribution of revenue-generating interactions across in-person, remote, and digital channels at a pace most organizations were not positioned to match (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024; McKinsey & Company (b), 2022). B2B companies averaged five distinct sales channels in 2016 and ten by 2021, with buyer preference for digital purchasing accelerating well beyond pre-pandemic projections (McKinsey & Company (b), 2022). The performance consequences are documented: hybrid selling generates up to 50% more revenue than traditional in-person models (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022), and companies that grew more than 10% in 2022 were 57% more likely to have adopted hybrid sales structures (McKinsey & Company (b), 2024). Those deploying the full portfolio of next-generation sales capabilities were twice as likely to sustain market share growth above 10% (McKinsey & Company (b), 2024). Next-generation sales capability research identifies three competency shifts required for sustained channel performance: becoming omnichannel orchestrators, adopting a value-creation mindset, and enabling continuous change management (McKinsey & Company (c), 2022). Digital marketing disruption in B2B supply chains alters information flows, coordination mechanisms, and responsiveness

across go-to-market networks, positioning channel reconfiguration as a strategic rather than operational decision (Srivastava, Purkayastha & Srivastava, 2026). Marketing agility, specifically, is identified as the mechanism through which AI technology adoption translates into sales team performance improvement in B2B contexts (Rodriguez & Peterson, 2025).

Competitive pressure on value propositions intensified alongside channel disruption during this period. Ebsta B2B Sales Report data covering \$37 billion in pipeline transactions document a 32% decline in average deal values in 2022 as buying committees expanded, decision timelines lengthened, and organizational risk aversion increased (Ebsta, 2023). HubSpot State of Sales data establish that customer acquisition costs rose by 54% across the same period and that B2B average win rates contracted to 21%, creating a structural deterioration in sales productivity that persisted into 2023 (HubSpot, 2023). One documented risk: organizations that invest in adaptive capability without maintaining stable value communication achieve agility at the cost of customer confidence, with win rates falling below those of less flexible competitors (Theoharakis et al., 2024). Value proposition recalibration requires adjusting sales messaging content to align with competitive conditions while maintaining sufficient consistency for customers to evaluate offerings against alternatives. Innovative digital sales technologies produce complementary positive effects on firm profit when sales task complexity matches technology design, but generate negative financial outcomes under complexity mismatch, establishing that adaptation mechanisms must be contingent on sales context rather than uniformly applied (Friess, 2024).

Long-term sustainable growth in B2B sales organizations requires management practices that go beyond quarterly performance optimization. Correggi et al. (2024) document an accelerating convergence between dynamic capabilities theory and long-term organizational resilience, identifying sensing and seizing capabilities as foundational to sustained competitive position. Growth benchmark research identifies customer portfolio prioritization as a high-leverage mechanism: high-growth companies invest in sales operations at 1.4 times the rate of low-growth peers. One documented case achieved a tenfold increase in cross-sell revenue within eight weeks of structured customer prioritization using predictive analytics (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Salesforce data show that organizations structuring cross-sell and upsell activities systematically generate approximately 21% of company revenue from those activities, with AI-assisted identification improving both detection rate and timing (Salesforce, 2023). CMO Survey data from Fall 2024 document that 85%

of 288 senior marketing leaders identify flexibility as their most critical organizational response to competitive threats (Moorman, 2024). Yet marketing budget as a share of company budget fell to 10.1% in the same period, the lowest recorded level. Sustainable growth requires adaptive strategy content and management structures that institutionalize adaptation capacity across market cycles rather than activating it only during disruption.

The synthesis across these four streams reveals a management gap that none individually addresses. Adaptive selling theory specifies salesperson behavior but not management strategy (Chaker et al., 2025; Cron, Alavi & Habel, 2022). Strategic agility frameworks specify organizational capability but not the specific mechanisms through which sales management deploys that capability in response to identifiable market triggers (Eckstein et al., 2025; Teece, 2024). Channel evolution research documents the performance consequences of channel configuration but not the decision process through which sales management reconfigures channel portfolios in response to buyer behavior signals (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024; McKinsey & Company (b), 2022). Competitive pressure research identifies value proposition instability as a performance driver but not the management actions that constitute effective recalibration under different competitive conditions (Theoharakis et al., 2024; Friess, 2024). A framework that connects specific market disruption triggers to specific management-level adaptation mechanisms, and links each mechanism to documented performance outcomes, is absent from the existing literature and represents the contribution of the present analysis.

3. Materials and Methods

A systematic review served as the primary study design, integrating peer-reviewed empirical literature with secondary data from industry research organizations. Constructing a management-level adaptation framework requires synthesizing evidence across three streams that do not converge in existing literature: adaptive selling behavior research, strategic agility and dynamic capabilities research, and B2B channel evolution and competitive performance research. Each stream produces evidence at a different level of analysis and with distinct methodological traditions, making cross-stream synthesis the more appropriate approach than primary data collection confined to any single organizational context.

Capturing management-level adaptation decisions and their revenue outcomes through primary data collection would require longitudinal access to multiple B2B organizations spanning a full market disruption

cycle, inclusive of pre-disruption baseline measurement, disruption event documentation, and post-adaptation performance tracking across comparable competitive conditions. Such a design exceeds both temporal and access constraints of the present analysis. Convergent evidence available across the three reviewed streams provides sufficient empirical grounding to construct and partially validate the proposed framework without primary data collection.

Database searches across Scopus, Web of Science, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar used four thematic clusters: B2B sales strategy adaptation and market responsiveness; channel mix evolution and hybrid selling performance; value proposition management under competitive pressure; and dynamic capabilities, strategic agility, and sustainable growth. Terms within each cluster were combined using Boolean logic, filtered to academic journal publications and documented industry research from January 2022 through March 2025. The search window covers the market disruption period that provides the empirical context for the framework. Key theoretical works predating this window, primarily Weitz adaptive selling theory and Teece dynamic capabilities, were retained where current literature builds on them as foundational references. Industry data from McKinsey, Ebsta, HubSpot, Salesforce, and the CMO Survey were incorporated where large-scale quantitative findings were not available from peer-reviewed sources at comparable scale.

Sources were evaluated against two criteria applied sequentially. Two criteria governed source inclusion, applied sequentially. Relevance required engagement with at least one of four areas: B2B market disruption and its effects on sales performance; sales strategy adjustment; channel configuration, value proposition, or customer portfolio management; or revenue growth and competitive advantage in B2B contexts. Sources engaging none of these variables were excluded. Methodological adequacy required peer-reviewed publication for academic sources or documented sample size, data source, and analytical methodology for industry sources. Sources addressing sales performance in non-B2B contexts without explicit cross-context implications were excluded, as were sources predating 2022 that did not provide foundational theoretical content. Twenty sources meeting both criteria were retained.

Framework construction followed a two-stage procedure. Sources were first coded by the disruption type they addressed (channel shift, competitive pressure, economic volatility, or buyer behavior change) and by the management response they documented or implied. In the second stage, management responses were classified by the level at which they operated: salesperson behavior, sales team practice, or sales strategy function. Responses at the strategy function level with convergent support across two or more

independent sources were retained as core mechanisms for framework construction; those supported by a single source were retained as indicative and noted in the discussion but not attributed framework-defining status. Three mechanisms met the established threshold and form the core of the framework presented in the Results section. Four methodological boundaries apply. First, the analysis is restricted to B2B sales contexts; B2C adaptation mechanisms may operate differently given shorter purchasing cycles and lower transaction complexity. Second, industry data sources use proprietary sampling frames and self-report collection methods without independent academic validation; benchmark figures drawn from these sources support descriptive claims rather than causal inference. Individual firm characteristics such as size, industry sector, and existing channel infrastructure remain outside the framework scope, even though prior B2B research has shown them to moderate how effectively organizations execute strategic adaptation. Fourth, the evidence base reflects market conditions from 2022 to 2024; whether the same mechanisms apply under different disruption types, such as supply-side shocks or regulatory changes, has not been examined.

4. Results and Discussion

Performance data from 2022 to 2024 show a consistent pattern: organizations that did not adjust sales strategy when market conditions shifted saw deterioration persist rather than self-correct. Salesforce data document that 84% of sales representatives failed to meet quota in the most recently tracked year (Salesforce, 2023), extending the collapse in quota attainment documented in 2022 pipeline data (Ebsta, 2023). Organizations that did adapt widened the performance gap relative to static competitors while conditions were most difficult. High-growth B2B companies invested in sales operations at 1.4 times the rate of low-growth peers (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Marketing budget as a share of company revenue fell to 10.1% in Fall 2024, the lowest recorded level, while 70% of sales teams simultaneously

reported more intensive budget scrutiny (Moorman, 2024). Two additional findings reinforce the adaptation argument. Rodriguez and Peterson (2025) find that AI adoption improves sales performance primarily when marketing agility mediates it; organizations deploying AI without adaptive management infrastructure capture significantly lower benefit. Agag et al. (2024), using longitudinal panel data, document that data-driven innovation capabilities are associated with competitive advantage through marketing agility as an intermediary – a temporal link invisible in single-period studies.

Channel portfolio rebalancing has the strongest and most consistently documented performance evidence among the three mechanisms. Figure 1 presents the MRSMM as a conceptual framework: market signal inputs on the left flow through the sales management function to three adaptation mechanisms, which in turn connect to revenue outcomes on the right. A feedback loop indicates that revenue outcomes inform how the organization reads subsequent market signals. Sales organizations that kept in-person-dominant configurations as digital channel revenue share rose from 30% in 2019 to 48% by 2024 lost both individual transactions and the relationship depth built through sustained presence across preferred channels (McKinsey & Company (a), 2024; McKinsey & Company (b), 2022). Hybrid selling generates up to 50% more revenue than field-only models, driven by broader reach and lower cost per interaction (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022). By 2024, 67% of industrial companies preferred digital interactions, up from 20% in 2019, meaning organizations that did not rebalance found themselves covering customers through channels those customers had already moved away from (McKinsey & Company(b), 2024). Applying the MRSMM starts with three straightforward steps. Step 1: identify which market signal is most active – buyer behavior shift, competitive pressure, or economic volatility – using Figure 1 as a reference. Step 2: select the corresponding adaptation mechanism and check whether current operations already address it. Step 3:

Table 1

MRSMM Adaptation Mechanisms: Market Triggers, Management Actions, and Performance Evidence

Mechanism	Market Trigger	Management Action	Performance Evidence
Channel Portfolio Rebalancing	In-person revenue share declining to 17%; buyer digital preference shift	Reallocate sales force time and coverage across in-person, remote, and digital channels	Hybrid model associates with +50% revenue vs. traditional; 57% of high-growth firms adopted hybrid (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024)
Value Proposition Recalibration	Deal value compression -32%; expanded buying committees; budget scrutiny increase	Shift from product-feature narrative to ROI/TCO framing aligned with multi-stakeholder decision criteria	Organizations using all 5 next-gen sales tactics 2x more likely to achieve 10%+ market share growth (McKinsey & Company(b), 2024)
Customer Portfolio Reallocation	CAC +54%; budget compression; rising churn risk among existing accounts	Prioritize high-LTV accounts; deploy predictive analytics for churn prevention and cross-sell identification	High-growth companies invest in sales ops at 1.4x rate of low-growth; 10x cross-sell revenue in 8 weeks documented (McKinsey & Company, 2023)

Source: compiled by the author based on McKinsey McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024; McKinsey & Company(b), 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2023), Ebsta (2023), HubSpot (2023), CMO Survey (2024)

prioritize the mechanism with the largest gap, and use Table 2 to set a realistic time horizon for results.

Figure 2 illustrates the directional shift in B2B revenue share across channels from 2019 to 2024. The values shown are approximate, based on reported directional findings from McKinsey B2B Pulse surveys; they are not precise measurements and should be read as an indication of trend direction rather than exact percentages. The figure provides visual context for why channel portfolio rebalancing has become a management priority. Value proposition recalibration addresses a different problem: what happens when deal values fall and buying committees grow at the same time. Ebsta pipeline data show that deal value compression in 2022 reflected reluctance to commit to large or long-term contracts under economic uncertainty, not primarily price sensitivity (Ebsta, 2023). When buying committees expand to include finance, operations, and procurement alongside the original business owner, a single-champion sales narrative no longer reaches all decision-makers. Next-generation sales capability research identifies value-creation mindset as one of three competency shifts needed for sustained performance, distinguishing organizations that communicate measurable business impact from those that stay at product specifications (McKinsey & Company (c), 2022). One documented risk: organizations that adapt their messaging constantly without maintaining a coherent core value framework achieve agility at the cost of customer confidence, reducing close rates below less flexible competitors (Theoharakis et al., 2024).

Recalibration in practice means two things happening at once: shifting sales messaging toward ROI and total cost of ownership framing, and developing communication sequences for different buying committee roles that still support a single coherent value story.

At the intersection of economic volatility and competitive pressure, customer portfolio reallocation addresses the structural inefficiency of applying uniform coverage intensity across accounts with materially different revenue potential and retention risk profiles. As customer acquisition costs escalate and win rates compress, the marginal return on new customer acquisition declines relative to retaining and expanding existing high-value relationships (HubSpot, 2023). High-growth companies prioritize sales operations investment at 1.4 times the rate of low-growth companies specifically to enable data-driven customer prioritization, with predictive analytics identifying share-of-wallet opportunities and churn risk within existing accounts (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Cross-sell and upsell activities account for approximately one-fifth of company revenue in organizations that structure them systematically, with AI-assisted expansion opportunity identification improving both detection rate and outreach timing precision (Salesforce, 2023). One documented case in McKinsey growth research achieved a tenfold increase in cross-sell revenue within eight weeks by sizing share-of-wallet opportunities and executing personalized outreach to prioritized accounts (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Customer portfolio reallocation does not require reducing coverage of lower-

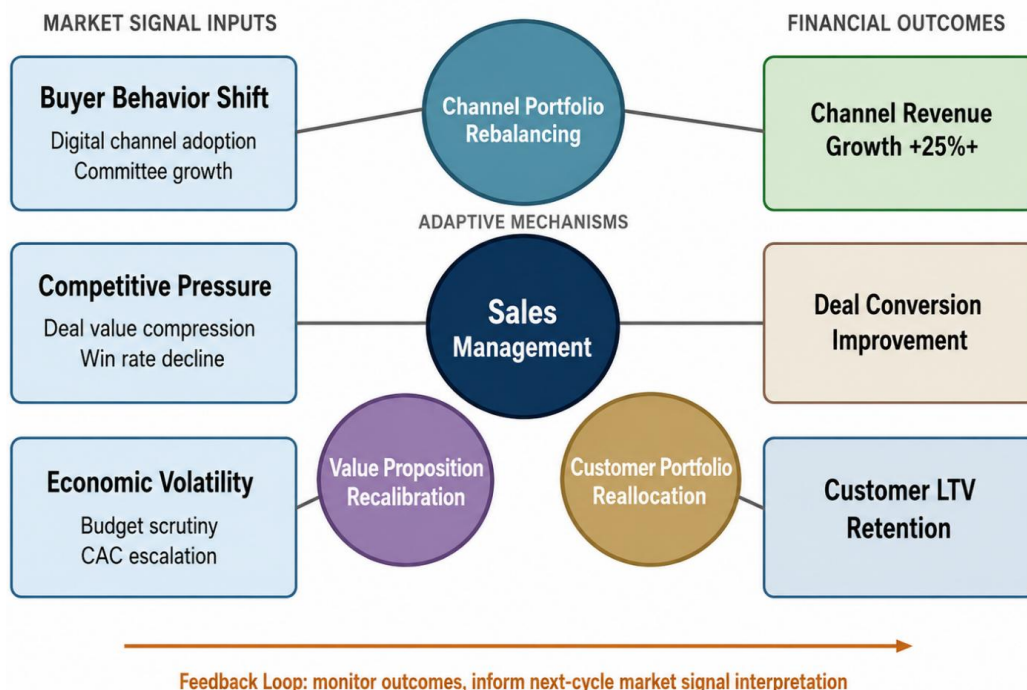


Figure 1. Market-Responsive Sales Management Model (MRSMM)

Source: developed by the author

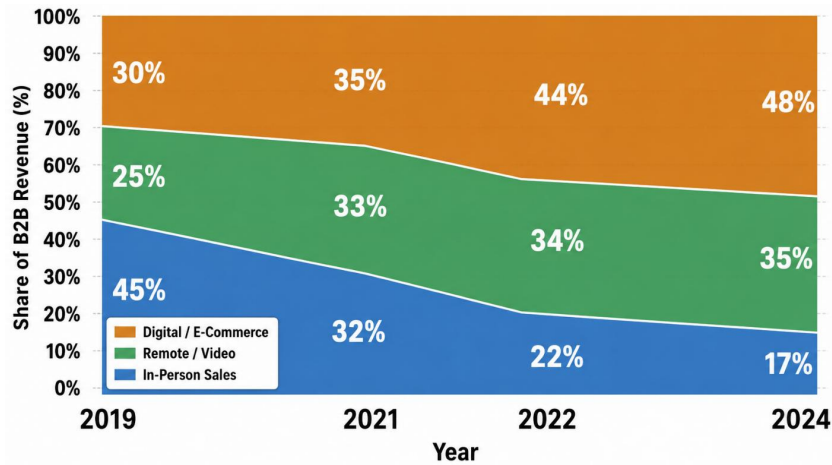


Figure 2. B2B Channel Revenue Share Shift, 2019–2024 (Illustrative, based on McKinsey B2B Pulse Survey data)

Source: adapted from McKinsey Global B2B Pulse Survey data (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024; McKinsey & Company (b), 2022) values are approximate based on reported directional findings

priority accounts to zero; it requires differentiating coverage intensity and message specificity in proportion to revenue potential and strategic relationship value.

The three mechanisms produce stronger results together than any one does alone. Three specific gaps appear when any mechanism is missing. Channel rebalancing without value recalibration: broader coverage, but the messaging is calibrated for a different buying context. The result is channel activity that does not convert into revenue at the expected rate. Value recalibration without customer reallocation: refined messaging applied equally across all accounts, including low-potential ones. Effort is diluted rather than concentrated where it matters most. Customer reallocation without channel rebalancing: priority accounts receive more attention, but through channels those customers have already indicated they prefer less. More coverage does not translate into more purchase behavior. Organizations deploying all three mechanisms simultaneously were twice as likely to achieve market

share growth above 10% compared to those using only one approach (McKinsey & Company(b), 2024). This pattern is consistent with evidence from adjacent research: digital sales technologies produce positive effects on firm profit only when customer-sensing and customer-linking tools are deployed together and matched to the sales context, not when used in isolation (Friess, 2024). Marketing agility research similarly finds that proactiveness, responsiveness, speed, and flexibility generate performance gains only as a coordinated set, not as separate capabilities (Eckstein et al., 2025).

The three mechanisms do not produce effects on the same timeline, and this matters for how managers sequence investment. Channel portfolio rebalancing produces the most immediate effects: organizations with existing digital infrastructure can observe pipeline generation rate shifts within a single quarter (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company (a), 2024). Value proposition recalibration takes longer – typically two to three quarters – as revised messaging

Table 2

Performance Evidence by Adaptation Mechanism: Evidence Strength and Conditions

Mechanism	Evidence Strength	Primary Condition	Constraint / Limitation
Channel Portfolio Rebalancing	Established (multiple sources, large-scale surveys)	Buyer digital preference sustained post-2022	Effectiveness contingent on existing infrastructure and salesperson digital capability (McKinsey & Company (c), 2022)
Value Proposition Recalibration	Established (longitudinal and survey evidence)	Multi-stakeholder buying committees present	Paradox of flexibility: over-adaptation reduces customer confidence (Theoharakis et al., 2024)
Customer Portfolio Reallocation	Established (case and survey evidence)	CAC escalation and budget compression active	Requires predictive analytics capability and CRM data quality not universally present (Friess, 2024)
Combined deployment (all three)	Established (McKinsey multiplier effect)	Full digital and hybrid capability in place	2x likelihood of 10%+ market share growth; dependent on simultaneous rather than sequential implementation (McKinsey & Company(b), 2024)

Source: compiled by the author based on McKinsey (McKinsey & Company (a), 2022; McKinsey & Company(b), 2024; Theoharakis et al., 2024; McKinsey & Company (c), 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2023, HubSpot (2023), Friess et al. (2024)

works through active deals, buying committee relationships adjust, and sales force communication habits stabilize (Theoharakis et al., 2024; McKinsey & Company (c), 2022). Correggi et al. (2024) suggest that sequential deployment builds adaptation capacity more durably than attempting all three simultaneously, even if it delays the full combined effect (Correggi, Guerini & Uberbacher, 2024). In practical terms, this means channel rebalancing is likely the right first investment, with value recalibration and customer reallocation following as the foundation stabilizes. Whether the 2x market share growth multiplier documented for combined deployment requires simultaneous or sequential implementation remains an open empirical question – one that longitudinal comparative research across disruption contexts could address.

5. Conclusions

Sustained competitive performance in B2B markets requires sales management adaptation at the strategy function level, beyond what individual salesperson behavior adjustment can achieve alone. Across 2022 to 2024, organizations that adjusted channel portfolios, value propositions, and customer coverage models in response to market signals outpaced those that held strategy constant while conditions shifted.

Three adaptation mechanisms constitute the core of the Market-Responsive Sales Management Model (MRSMM): channel portfolio rebalancing in response to buyer channel shift, value proposition recalibration under competitive pressure and expanded buying committee complexity, and customer portfolio reallocation under escalating acquisition costs. Channel

rebalancing produces quarterly pipeline effects; value recalibration produces two to three quarter conversion effects; customer reallocation produces six to twelve month revenue compounding. Operating on different time horizons, their contributions are often miscredited or invisible in single-period performance reviews.

Deploying all three mechanisms simultaneously associates with twice the likelihood of achieving market share growth exceeding 10% compared to single-mechanism deployment, establishing that the mechanisms function as an integrated portfolio rather than independent interventions. Neither adaptive selling theory nor dynamic capabilities theory specifies how this portfolio is managed at the sales management function level, leaving a gap that the MRSMM addresses by connecting specific market signal types to specific management-level actions with documented revenue evidence.

Sustainable competitive advantage in B2B sales requires adaptation capacity that is institutionalized across market cycles, not activated reactively during disruption events. Organizations that invested in sales operations infrastructure during 2022 to 2024 entered subsequent competitive cycles with structural advantages over those that treated adaptation as a disruption-specific response. Future research should examine whether MRSMM mechanism sequence mediates the performance multiplier, whether the mechanisms generalize to supply-side market disruptions, and how firm-level moderators such as channel infrastructure maturity and data capability shape which mechanism delivers the strongest return at which deployment stage.

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