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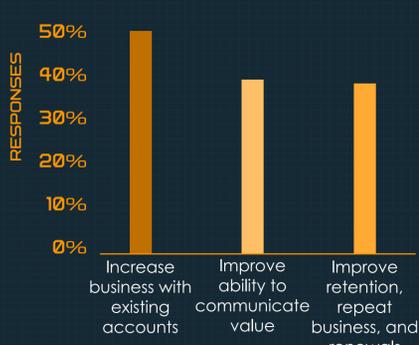
## Sales Skills to Differentiate Your Team

In our recent Top-Performing Sales Organization study, we were particularly interested in the sales skills that stood out when sellers not only met their goals, but also believed their goals were challenging.

Of the 9 skills we studied, 4 rose to the top because they represent the largest skills gap between sellers who meet challenging sales goals and those who don't. And the 5th? Core consultative selling is still considered the price of entry, and it was the 3rd highest rated skill.

### 01. Driving Account Growth

When we conducted our study, we found that the top priorities of sales leaders are to:



Account growth is the #1 skill difference between those who meet challenging sales goals and those who don't, and everyone else is prioritizing it, so you should be too.

More than **4 out of 10** respondents believe they should be generating 50% or more revenue from their strategic accounts.

More than **7 out of 10** respondents believe they should be generating 25% or more revenue from their strategic accounts.

**65%**

of Top Performers agree their sellers have the skills they need to drive account growth, while only 43% of The Rest agree—there is room for improvement in both groups.

Selling to existing accounts is much easier than bringing in new logos, as buyers already know you and you have a proven track record with them.

### 02. Advanced Consultative Selling

#### What is meant by advanced consultative selling?

Sellers:

- Lead with insight
- Redefine needs
- Collaborate with buyers
- Maximize impact

There's room for all organizations to improve in this area.

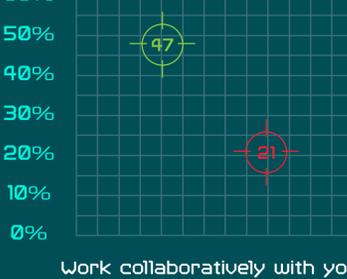
Only **64%** of buyers agree that sales winners educate with new ideas and perspectives.

Only **49%** of Top Performers agree that their teams are skilled in advanced consultative selling.

Improvement needs to start at the company level. Sales leaders agree or strongly agree with the following statements about the effectiveness of their company process to...



Internally assess and evaluate additional value you can bring to strategic accounts



Work collaboratively with your strategic accounts to co-create value in new, innovative ways

■ Top Performers ■ The Rest

### 03. Driving & Winning Opportunities

Driving and winning sales opportunities is the #1 rated skill for both Elite & Top-Performing Sales Organizations. **Companies that focus on driving sales wins actually win more sales.**



That being said, just because the self-assessment correlates with higher win rates does not mean that buyers have this perception. In fact, when asked, we found that:



Buyers view **75%** of purchases as "strategic opportunities," meaning the buyer isn't required to buy, but is making a purchase as an investment.

Yet, only **14%** of buyers report discovering these strategic opportunities from sellers versus other people and personal research.



### 04. Filling the Pipeline

To meet your sales goals, you must be constantly filling the front end of your pipeline.



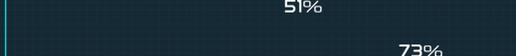
Top Performers are nearly **2x** more likely to agree that their lead generation is highly effective.

Gaining access to enterprise-level decision makers and developing strong relationships with those decision makers are two of the most important skills when filling the pipeline, and Top Performers fare better.

Gain access to executive, enterprise-level decision makers



Develop strong relationships with executive, enterprise-level decision makers



■ Top Performers ■ The Rest

### 05. Core Consultative Selling

**2.5X**

Sales winners are **2.5x** more likely than second-place finishers to understand buyer needs.

The 2nd strongest skill area for Top Performers is core consultative selling. It also represents the 4th greatest skills gap between Top Performers and The Rest.



#### What did buyers say second-place finishers should have done differently to win their business?

- Create the perception that the overall value they offer is superior to others
- Craft a compelling solution
- Understand buyers' needs

In short, buyers pick sellers with strong core consultative selling skills.

>> **Core consultative selling is the #2 strongest skill rated by Elite and Top Performers, which is no surprise as it forms the foundation of all successful sales organizations.**

RAIN Group clients receive exclusive access to our full library of research, analyst time to discuss how the findings apply to their organizations, and early access to new research findings.

#### SOURCES

1. Mike Schultz, "What Defines a Top-Performing Sales Organization?" RAIN Group, <http://www.rainsalestraining.com/blog/what-defines-a-top-performing-sales-organization>.
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4. Mike Schultz and John Doerr, *What Sales Winners Do Differently* (RAIN Group, 2013).



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