

TOP 10 CHALLENGES

Sales Leaders Faced in 2024 & Actionable Paths Forward

GTM 10

Introduction

As part of the GTM10 nomination process, Cello conducted over 150 semi-structured interviews with sales professionals from Big Tech giants, high-growth scale-ups, and GTM influencers. Based on these GTM10 interviews, Cello's research reveals the ten biggest challenges marketing teams faced in 2024.

By aligning your priorities with GTM10 honorees' proven playbooks, you can transform past hurdles into growth engines:

Core Challenges:

Meeting aggressive targets on tight budgets, entering new markets, refining lead handoffs, and scaling teams—each directly impacts revenue velocity, forecast accuracy, and retention.

Actionable Playbooks:

Concrete tactics—quota frameworks, organizational designs, and strategic tech investments—that top performers have applied.

Next Steps

A concise three-point roadmap to benchmark your current state, prioritize high-impact initiatives, and set success metrics for continuous progress.

Insights from the Front Line

“Building a unified revenue operating system and leadership academy aligned our go-to-market functions and fueled a leap in ARR growth.”

“Migrating our entire sales force onto a single CRM platform and retraining teams unlocked cleaner data and accelerated our GTM iterations.”

“Implementing role-based onboarding tracks with clear ramp milestones and internal knowledge hubs dramatically shortened our ramp time and improved retention.”

— GTM10 Interviewees

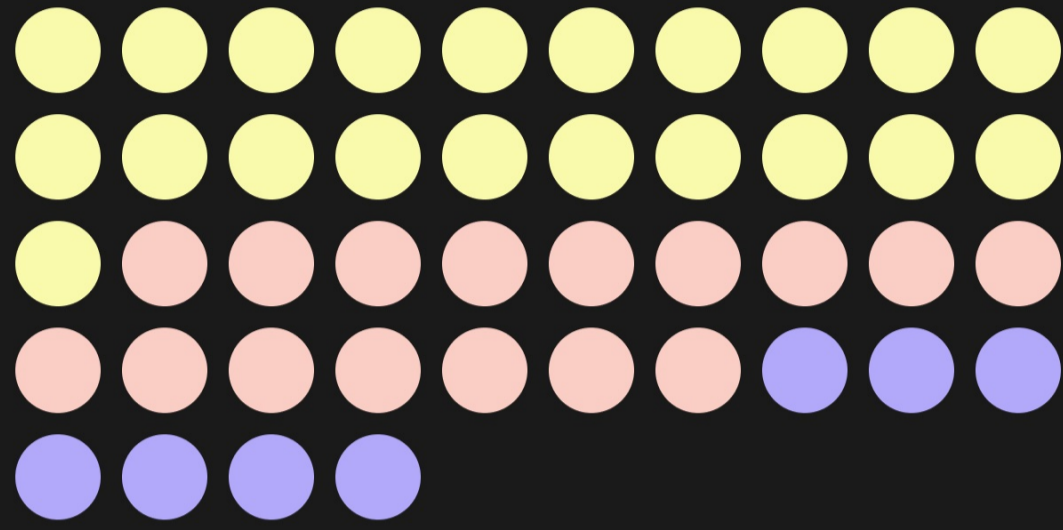
Top Challenges Overview

RANK	CHALLENGE	PREVALENCE	BUSINESS IMPACT
01	MEETING AGGRESSIVE GROWTH & SCALING GOALS	VERY HIGH	CRITICAL
02	EXPANDING INTO NEW MARKETS & SEGMENTS	VERY HIGH	HIGH
03	MANAGING TEAM STRUCTURE, TURNOVER & HEADCOUNT	HIGH	HIGH
04	STREAMLINING GTM PROCESS INEFFICIENCIES	HIGH	HIGH
05	INTEGRATING DATA & TECHNOLOGY FOR SALES EFFICIENCY	MODERATE	MEDIUM
06	EQUIPPING TEAMS THROUGH COACHING & ENABLEMENT	MODERATE	MEDIUM
07	DRIVING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION	MODERATE	MEDIUM
08	ARTICULATING PRODUCT POSITIONING & VALUE PROPOSITION	LOW	MEDIUM
09	ACCELERATING ONBOARDING & RAMP OF NEW REPS	LOW	LOW
10	ENSURING FORECAST ACCURACY & PIPELINE VISIBILITY	LOW	LOW

The GTM10 Awards in Numbers

806

TOTAL NOMINATIONS



386

STARTUP/SCALE UP

276

BIG TECH

144

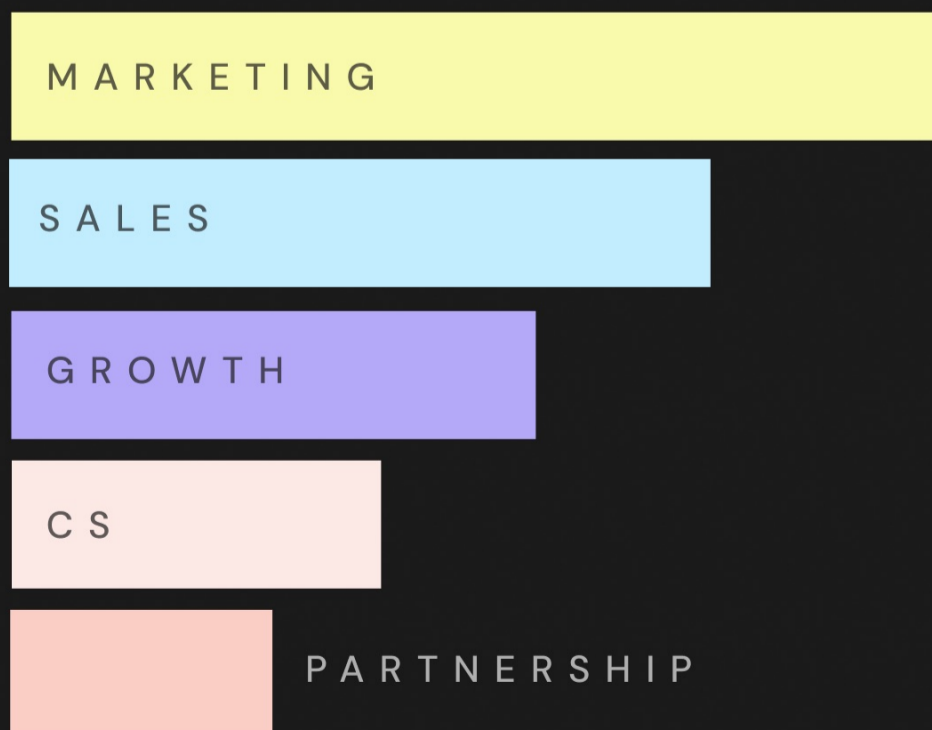
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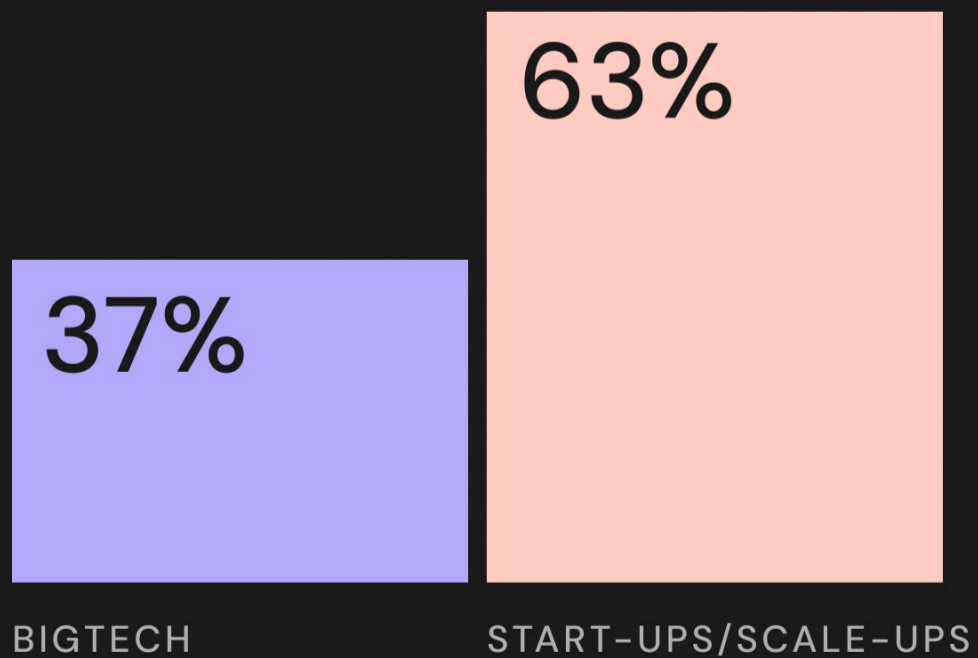
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COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

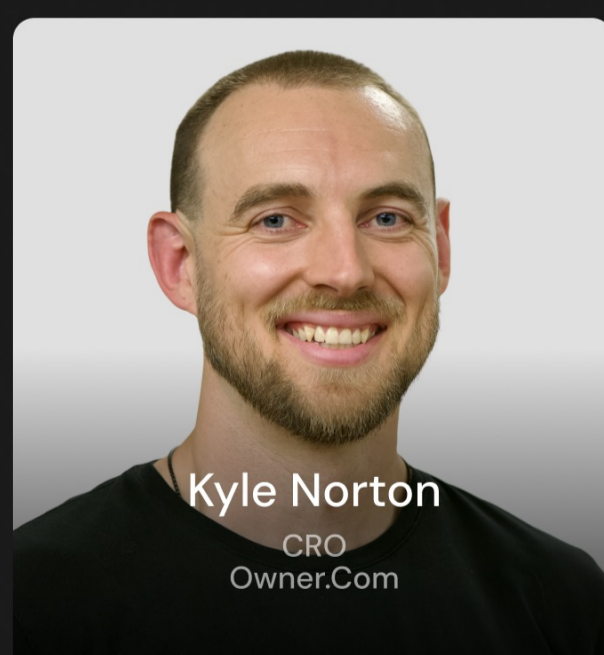
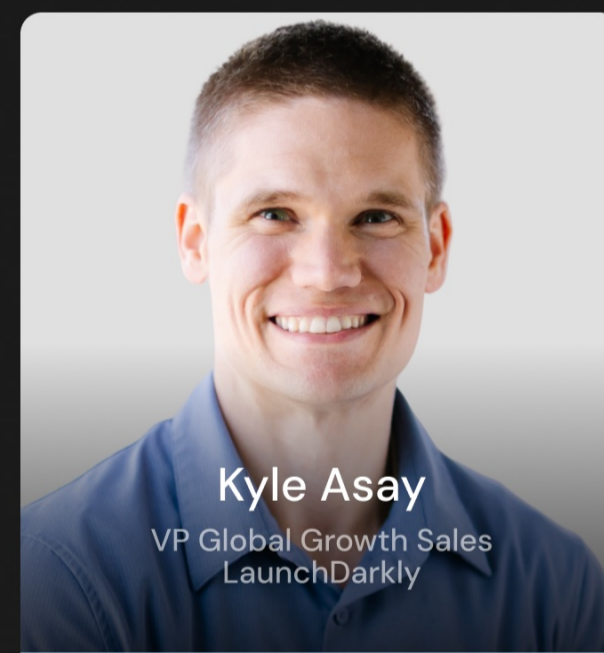
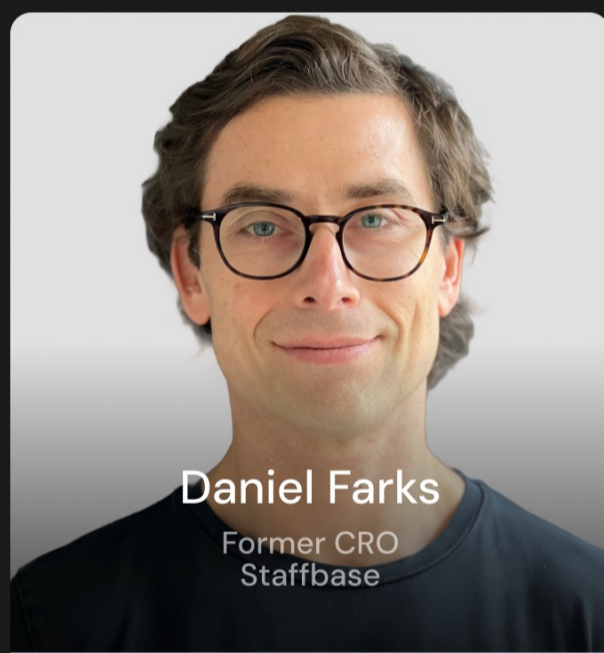
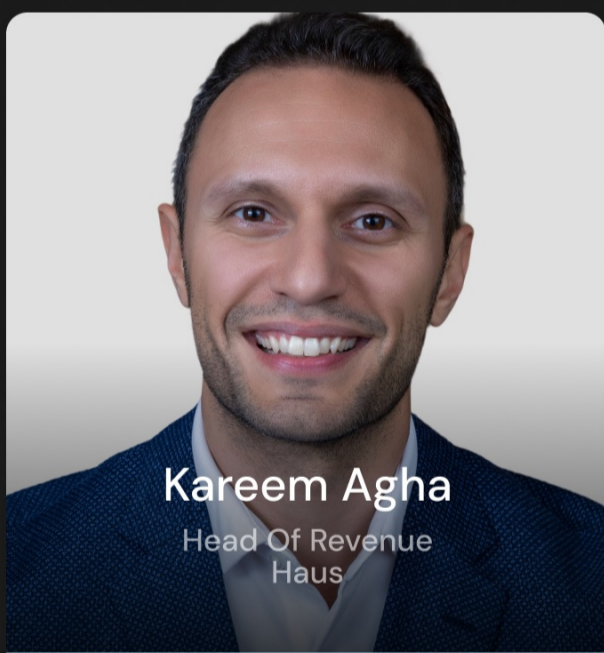
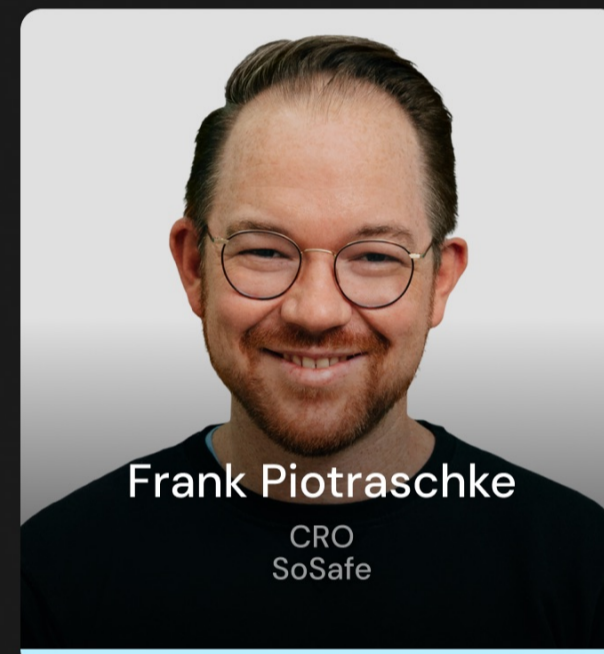
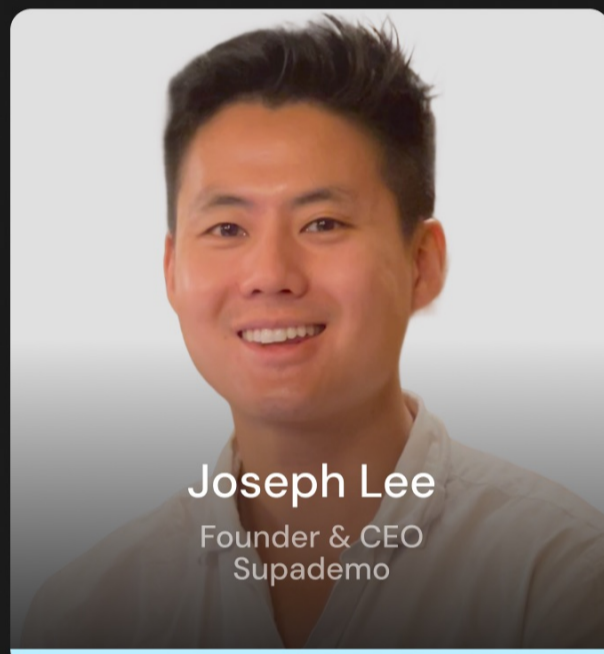
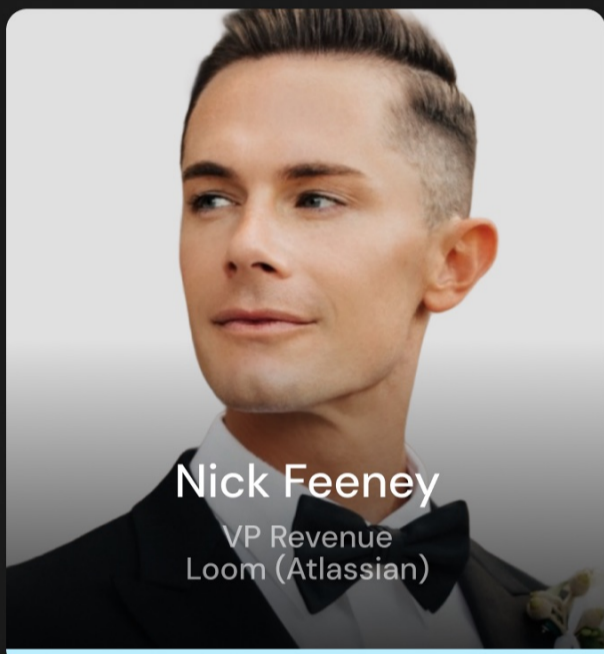
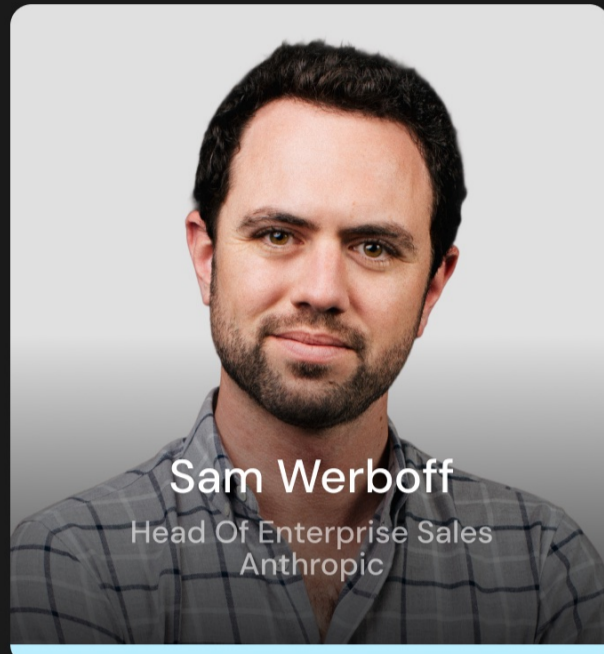
Most competitive category



Startups vs. BigTech



Meet the Sales Winners



The Sales Jury



Javier Molina

CRO • DOCKER

Javier Molina is CRO at Docker, serving 15 M developers; former CRO at Starburst and SVP Sales at MongoDB; active startup advisor and investor.



Gaëtan Gachet

FOUNDING CSO • ALGOLIA

Gaëtan Gachet was founding CSO of Algolia, scaling global sales over 11 years; now EIR at Singular, focused on B2B SaaS and enterprise growth.



Mark Roberge

FOUNDING CRO • HUBSPOT

Mark Roberge scaled HubSpot from zero to \$100 M ARR; he is now Stage 2 Capital co-founder and Harvard lecturer, bestselling author, and advises SaaS firms on GTM strategy.



Matt Rosenberg

CRO • GRAMARLY

Matt Rosenberg is CRO at Grammarly; he scaled Compass to \$6 B and led Eventbrite growth; a four-time IPO veteran building global sales organizations.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

1. Meeting Aggressive Growth & Scaling Goals

The Challenge

Targets demand exponential ARR expansion and capital efficiency, even as market dynamics shift rapidly.

- Small, lean teams are often tasked with driving disproportionate growth without commensurate headcount increases.
- Fragmented go-to-market structures and unclear revenue operations frameworks lead to inconsistent execution.
- Resource constraints—limited budgets, tight hiring pipelines, and minimal process maturity—amplify pressure on existing reps.

Playbook

Modular GTM Frameworks

Adopt a “people-light, AI-first” motion that leverages automation for lead qualification, routing, and follow-up.

Outcome-Based Metrics

Tie rep and team goals to unit-economics (e.g., burn multiple, deal size) rather than pure seat count.

Quarterly Growth Sprints

Run focused, cross-functional campaigns each quarter aimed at specific verticals or deal sizes.

Expected Impact

Higher velocity without a linear headcount ramp; more predictable unit economics.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

2. Lead Generation & Demand Creation

The Challenge

Breaking into adjacent industries, geographies, or buyer personas uncovers skepticism, cultural nuances, and go-to-market unknowns.

- Experimentation is hampered by insufficient localized insights and one-size-fits-all messaging.
- Teams lack dedicated resources to build regional motions or test cultural nuances before full-scale launch.
- Cross-functional alignment on ICP refinements and win themes often lags, slowing go-to-market responsiveness.

Playbook

Pilot & Learn

Launch with a small cohort of target accounts to validate messaging and refine positioning before scale-up.

Regional GTM Hubs

Empower local or segment-focused teams with tailored collateral, budgets, and SLAs for rapid iteration.

Cross-Functional Market Councils

Align sales, marketing, product, and customer success on ICP refinements and win themes.

Expected Impact

Faster traction in new segments, richer localized insights, and lower pilot-to-scale risk.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

3. Managing Team Structure, Turnover & Headcount

The Challenge

Rapid hiring, role shifts, and churn create knowledge gaps and uneven coverage across territories.

- High churn and shifting responsibilities leave coverage gaps and degrade institutional knowledge.
- Onboarding processes are uneven or ad hoc, extending ramp times and reducing early productivity.
- Lack of clear role definitions and career-path visibility fuels disengagement and attrition.

Key pain points:

Role-Based Onboarding Tracks

Standardize ramp programs with clear milestones, buddy systems, and hands-on shadowing.

Knowledge Hubs & "Office Hours"

Maintain an internal wiki of playbooks, recorded best-practice sessions, and expert drop-ins.

Career-Path Rituals

Conduct quarterly check-ins that align aspirations, skill gaps, and rotation opportunities to reduce attrition.

Expected Impact

Faster rep productivity, more cohesive team culture, and lower ramp variability.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

4. Streamlining GTM Process Inefficiencies

Why it matters:

Lead routing delays, manual CRM updates, and hand-off friction waste rep bandwidth and slow pipeline flow.

- Manual routing and data entry consume significant rep time and introduce errors.
- CRM fragmentation and duplicate records obscure pipeline health and impede forecasting.
- Undefined handoff criteria between marketing and sales create gaps in follow-up and accountability.

Key pain points:

Automated Lead Workflows

Use a centralized routing engine to assign leads based on capacity, territory, and fit.

CRM Clean-Up Blitz

Deduplicate records, enforce data standards, and archive stale opportunities quarterly.

Handoff Protocols

Define clear, automated SLAs for MQL→SQL progression with notification triggers and accountability owners.

Expected Impact

Reduced administrative overhead, faster lead engagement, and smoother funnel progression.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

5. Integrating Data & Technology For Sales Efficiency

Why it matters:

Fragmented tech stacks and poor data hygiene undermine prospect scoring, routing accuracy, and forecasting.

- Disparate tools and manual integrations lead to inconsistent data and limited visibility.
- Infrequent or reactive data audits result in stale or duplicate records that skew insights.
- Multiple dashboards and disconnected reports hamper real-time decision-making.

Key pain points:

Tech Stack Rationalization

Consolidate to a unified CRM + engagement platform with point solutions only where essential.

Continuous Data Audit

Automate hygiene checks—duplicate removal, enrichment triggers, field-validation rules.

Dashboard Unification

Surface real-time lead, opportunity, and pipeline metrics in a single pane of glass.

Expected Impact

Reduced tool friction, cleaner scoring models, and faster decision-making.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

6. Equipping Teams Through Coaching & Enablement

Why it matters:

Inconsistent play adoption and skill development yield uneven performance and missed opportunities.

- Training programs are irregular and misaligned with evolving sales motions.
- Limited enablement tooling (e.g., call-scoring, content repositories) reduces coaching effectiveness.
- Rep engagement with enablement content is low without clear incentives or reinforcement.

Key pain points:

Real-Time Coaching Tools

Deploy call-transcription and AI-based call-scoring to surface best practices and coaching moments.

Sales Playbooks

Publish concise, battle-tested guides for each major call type—cold outreach, discovery, demo, and objection handling.

Enablement Cadence

Schedule regular “skill clinics” and peer-review sessions tied to current product launches or market shifts.

Expected Impact

More consistent messaging, faster skill acquisition, and higher win rates.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

7. Driving Customer Engagement & Education

Why it matters:

Complex solutions and evolving buyer journeys require continuous touchpoints to maintain momentum and build trust.

- Buyers require multi-format content to navigate technical evaluations and internal approvals.
- Infrequent or generic outreach fails to sustain engagement across long sales cycles.
- Lack of structured feedback loops limits the ability to refine educational content in real time.

Key pain points:

Guided Demo Journeys

Incorporate interactive product walkthroughs and success stories that align to common buyer pain points.

Content-Driven Cadence

Blend thought-leadership emails, video micro-lessons, and peer testimonials in nurture streams.

Customer Advisory Boards

Invite top prospects into closed-door sessions that double as both education and relationship-building forums.

Expected Impact

Higher demo-to-proposal conversion, deeper product understanding, and stickier customer relationships.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

8. Articulating Product Positioning & Value Proposition

Why it matters:

Evolving feature sets and competitive noise make it hard for reps to deliver crisp, differentiated messaging.

- Rapid product iterations outpace updates to playbooks and sales collateral.
- Competitive claims and market jargon dilute core value narratives.
- Reps lack quick-reference tools for objection handling and persona-specific pitches.

Key pain points:

Value-Prop Heatmap

Map top competitor claims vs. your unique strengths, then train reps on how to “flip” each objection.

Playbook Inserts

Embed 30-second “elevator pitches” for each persona and vertical into call decks and CRM prompts.

Living Battle Cards

Maintain an always-on repository of objection responses, case-study blurbs, and ROI calculators.

Expected Impact

Clearer differentiation, faster conversation pivots, and more confident reps.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

9. Accelerating Onboarding & Ramp Of New Reps

Why it matters:

Extended time-to-first-deal drags on capacity and delays coverage in high-velocity markets.

- Absence of structured ramp scorecards makes it hard to track early-stage progress.
- Shadowing opportunities are inconsistently organized, leaving new hires underexposed to best practices.
- Onboarding content often lacks alignment with real-world selling scenarios.

Key pain points:

Shadow-Then-Solo Framework

New reps spend initial weeks observing top performers, then run co-paced live calls.

Ramp Scorecards

Track activity (calls, emails), pipeline creation, and early-stage conversion metrics against week-by-week goals.

Product “Deep-Dives”

Schedule intensive workshops on core value props, common objections, and demo scripting.

Expected Impact

Shorter ramp curves, more consistent early results, and scalable coverage expansion.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

10. Ensuring Forecast Accuracy & Pipeline Visibility

Why it matters:

Lack of consistent definitions, subjective deal health assessments, and siloed forecasting templates lead to variance.

- Inconsistent deal-stage criteria and health metrics create divergent pipeline views.
- Forecasting templates live in silos (spreadsheets, slide decks), hindering collaboration.
- Absence of a unified confidence scoring mechanism obscures risk concentrations.

Key pain points:

Standardized Deal Scoring

Implement a rubric that weights product fit, engagement level, and exec sponsorship.

Rolling Forecast Cadence

Combine top-down target reviews with bottom-up deal-by-deal qualification sessions weekly.

Forecast Confidence Index

Tag each deal with a confidence score to highlight risk and focus leadership attention.

Expected Impact

More reliable revenue projections, clearer risk management, and data-driven pipeline prioritization.

Conclusion & Recommendations

These ten challenges define the battleground for sales organizations in 2024. By embracing the playbooks outlined above—from process automation and data unification to market pilots and rigorous enablement—teams can transform these obstacles into strategic advantages.

Next Steps for Your Team

Benchmark

Assess your current practices against each challenge area to reveal strengths and gaps.

Prioritize

Choose one “quick win” (e.g., automate lead routing) and one “strategic shift” (e.g., launch a focused market pilot).

Measure & Iterate

Define clear KPIs, review progress monthly, and refine tactics based on real-world outcomes.

Prepared by the GTM10 Awards Research team at Cello.

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