

How AI is shaping the future of sales strategies

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Colleen McClure, Ph.D. Credit: University of Alabama at Birmingham

In the fast-evolving business landscape, artificial intelligence, or AI, is

taking center stage in transforming sales processes, making them more efficient and responsive to the dynamic market demands. A new University of Alabama at Birmingham study titled "AI in Sales: Laying the Foundations for Future Research" highlights the pivotal role AI is playing in reshaping the sales sector.

UAB Collat School of Business Professor Colleen McClure, Ph.D., and her colleagues provide insight into how AI tools have permeated the sales function, emphasizing that "AI technologies are helping to augment every phase of the sales process, especially as it relates to complex B2B sales." With AI predicted to fulfill 60% of sales tasks by 2028—a dramatic increase from 45% in 2023—the sales domain is on the brink of a significant transformation.

The [study](#), published in the *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, provides a comprehensive analysis of AI's implications for various stakeholders.

For salespeople: AI reduces routine workloads and enhances focus on strategic activities. As the researchers note, "Sales reps will be less focused on activities such as prospecting and cold calling, thanks to AI's ability to analyze data and predict [customer](#) behavior with high accuracy."

For sales managers: AI aids in better coaching and effective performance tracking. Managers can utilize AI tools for real-time feedback and guidance, making the coaching process more data-driven and personalized.

For organizations: The predictive power of AI contributes to more accurate sales forecasting and strategic decision-making, enabling organizations to navigate market complexities with greater agility.

For customers: They benefit from more tailored interactions and service, improving their overall experience and satisfaction.

The research addresses the challenges of AI integration, such as the need for continual training and adaptation to new technologies, and the risks associated with data accuracy and privacy concerns.

"As AI impacts various stakeholders, a general overview of the challenges and opportunities AI poses to the sales function is necessary," McClure said. "We need to look further into how AI technologies can further revolutionize sales strategies and customer management. Our study highlights the importance of exploring AI's long-term effects on customer relationships and the evolving needs of sales organizations."

The researchers' exploration into the practical applications of AI in sales showcases various tools currently in use. For instance, AI applications like Gong and Salesforce.com are cited for their ability to enhance lead scoring and customer relationship management, respectively. These tools exemplify how AI can streamline operations and foster more meaningful interactions with customers.

"The pace at which AI is evolving necessitates ongoing research to keep up with its advancements and to better understand its broad implications across different sectors of sales," McClure said. "We need a balanced view that recognizes AI's potential to transform [sales](#) and the need for strategic oversight to manage its integration effectively."

More information: Colleen E. McClure et al, AI in sales: Laying the foundations for future research, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* (2024). [DOI: 10.1080/08853134.2024.2329905](https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2024.2329905)

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