

The Evolution of Enterprise Sales Development in the Era of AI – An Descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancements that have occurred in the sphere of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have created new trends of development of enterprise sales development and changed the processes of how enterprises create their prospects, understand the customers' needs, interact with decision makers and conduct business development. In this research paper, the author is going to investigate trends of development of enterprise sales development in the era of AI, particularly, the trends of transformation of traditional volume-based prospecting into modern data-driven and personalized selling. For this research paper, the study is going to use a descriptive research design with the use of an inductive approach under the interpretivist research paradigm and the secondary data only.

The study concludes that AI is being used more and more to enhance sales development through advanced account intelligence, personalization, automation, prediction, and increased sales productivity, although literature also suggests that human judgment, relationship building, contextual awareness, and organizational capabilities are key. The study develops an AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework that combines human expertise with AI intelligence throughout the enterprise sales development process, and the insights gained by the study offer practical suggestions for firms adopting AI in their enterprise selling process.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Evolution of Enterprise Sales Development

Enterprise sales have been defined traditionally by complicated buying process, extended sales cycle, several decision makers and significant engagement of sellers and customers. In contrast to transactional consumer sales, enterprise selling presupposes knowledge of organizational needs of the customer, identification of relevant parties, relationship building and support of the customers at several stages of the purchasing process. Therefore, sales development becomes a vital element of generating and qualifying opportunities prior to entering the later stages of the enterprise sales process.

Traditionally, the task of sales development involved cold calling, email outreach, personal connections, manual research of prospects and experience of sales people. Sales Development Representatives (SDRs) were responsible for identification of target audience, outreach of prospects, lead qualification and generation of appointments for account executives, with performance of SDRs being measured by activity-based metrics such as number of calls made, emails sent and appointments generated.

Digitalisation of business had changed this environment significantly. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, digital communications, social selling platforms, and sales intelligence databases provided the organizations with the ability to gather more data on the customers and the market

environment, thus enabling sales representatives to investigate organizations and their decision-makers before making first contacts and moving from general approaches to segmentation and personalized communication (Mahlamäki et al., 2020).

Introduction of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one more step in this evolution. AI solutions are able to analyze large amounts of both structured and unstructured information, find patterns in it, make conclusions, automate routine processes and help in making decisions. In B2B sales, AI is used for such purposes as lead generation, account research, lead scoring, sales forecasting, customer journey management, personalization, and CRM analytics, and the SDR role is therefore changing from performing routine tasks to analyzing information and having meaningful conversations with potential clients. It is not to say that there are no more traditional sales functions; on the contrary, it can be said that new technologies only help in improving and developing existing processes and sales functions in their manner of execution. This is why this evolution can be seen as an overall evolution that appears several times during this report:

Traditional Sales Development → Digital Sales Development → Data-Driven Sales Development → AI-Assisted Sales Development → AI-Enabled Contextual Selling

However, the integration of AI into enterprise sales functions does not negate the importance of human intervention in the process. Purchasing decisions in enterprise-level sales often require a lot of organisational and contextual aspects, as well as many stakeholders who will change their requirements at some point. Therefore, the emerging literature often focuses on AI as a technology that can supplement human sales skills rather than replace sales people.

1.2 Emergence of AI and Changing B2B Buyer Behavior

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence became especially important for B2B sales, since sales processes within enterprises produce huge amounts of information about customers, accounts, interactions, and market conditions that could hardly be processed manually. The areas of application of AI in sales include prospect and account discovery, lead scoring and prioritization, customer and account intelligence, sales forecasting, sales automation, personalized communication, customer journey analytics, CRM intelligence, sales performance analytics, and recommendations and decision support. But the existing literature stresses the importance of having proper data, processes, management, and employees' skills for getting value from these technologies; therefore, the effect of AI on enterprise sales process development should be understood as organizational change rather than just another sales tool acquisition.

The above change is linked closely to the shift in the behaviour of B2B buyers. The business buyers are now able to get much more information prior to getting in contact with the salespeople, using digital means to research the vendors and their products, evaluate alternative solutions and create requirements in advance. Consequently, there is an increasing need for salespeople to add value besides providing information about the products, which in turn made it more important to personalize the enterprise sales development process. This is where AI may assist salespeople in gathering account information, although the ultimate customer interaction still relies on interpretation of the information gathered by the salesperson.

1.3 Research Problem, Questions and Objectives

While the fast adoption of AI technologies in business has generated many new opportunities for enterprise sales departments, it has also generated a lot of uncertainties about the transformation of the sales development function itself. Much of the discussions of AI in sales that currently emerge tend to focus on specific implementations like automation, forecasting, CRM, chatbots, or lead scoring. However, less

attention is paid to the general transformation of enterprise sales development as a function. Thus, the main problem to which the current research is devoted is the problem of understanding how AI transforms enterprise sales development and how the function of sales development changes in the direction of moving from activity-based prospecting to data-based, personalized, and contextual selling.

The main research question of the study is:

How is AI transforming enterprise sales development, and what new changes are arising in the sales development process and sales development profession?

The other questions considered in the research are:

- How has enterprise sales development developed alongside digitalisation and the implementation of artificial intelligence?
- What are the key applications of AI in the B2B enterprise sales funnel?
- How does AI affect prospecting, personalisation, lead qualifying, and customer engagement?
- How is the role of Sales Development Representative transforming in an AI-enabled environment?
- What benefits and barriers are involved in the adoption of artificial intelligence in enterprise sales development?
- What approaches are needed to foster human-AI collaboration in enterprise sales?

Correspondingly, there are seven specific research objectives of the study: to explore the evolution of enterprise sales development from conventional prospecting towards AI-driven approaches; to review the key applications of artificial intelligence in the B2B enterprise sales funnel; to explore the influence of artificial intelligence on prospecting, account intelligence, lead qualifying, personalization, and engagement; to explore the evolution of the role of Sales Development Representatives; to highlight the key opportunities and challenges of AI adoption; to comparatively review AI-driven sales approaches in selected businesses using secondary sources of evidence; and to create a conceptual model for contextual selling through AI in the enterprise technology markets.

1.4 Scope and Relevance of the Research

The scope of the present research is confined to enterprise and B2B sales development, considering its context within the use of Artificial Intelligence, in particular, the initial and intermediate phases of the B2B sales process, i.e., account identification, prospecting, lead generation and qualification, account intelligence, stakeholder identification, sales engagement, personalization, sales automation, and opportunity development, as well as the evolving roles of sales development professionals and human-AI collaboration. In regard to the organisational aspect, the scope of the study comprises selected enterprises and organizations operating in the field of business and enterprise technology, for which enough secondary information is publicly accessible. It is not implied that the practices discussed in the research are characteristic of all organisations and sectors. The study will not include any primary methods of data collection, such as surveys, interviews, experiments or other proprietary data.

This research is important since AI is becoming more and more relevant to how organizations are handling their sales and customer interaction processes, but the particular relevance for the sales development field still needs to be explored. From the academic perspective, the paper synthesizes literature on B2B marketing, sales management, digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, sales automation, CRM, and organizational capabilities in order to achieve an integrative vision of the current state of affairs. The managerial contribution of the study lies in helping sales executives understand the role of AI in enabling sales-development processes and the reasons why the technological solutions have to be complemented by certain organizational capabilities and sound judgement. For sales development professionals, the

research shows new requirements for their skills due to AI taking care of many of their routine tasks. It suggests an AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework which is a systematic way of looking at how the intelligence provided through AI can be used in the sales development process of the enterprise.

1.5 Key Concepts and Structure of the Report

To maintain consistency in terminology throughout the report, a few terms are defined below. Enterprise sales means the sale of goods and services to businesses, which is characterized by complicated purchases and extended sales cycles. Sales development means the process of prospecting, researching, connecting with and qualifying potential business buyers to take opportunities beyond the stage of initial contact to the point where sales are made, while the Sales Development Representative (SDR) is a sales person who is primarily focused on these activities. Artificial Intelligence is the technology that can recognize patterns, make predictions, process information and provide decision-making support, while AI-enabled sales development means the application of these technologies to support or automate prospecting, account intelligence, qualification, engagement, personalization and opportunity development. Contextual selling is a method of tailoring engagement to the individual context of the business buyer, while human-AI collaboration is the merging of the analytical capabilities of AI with the human ability to communicate and develop relationships.

The rest of the report is structured into five additional chapters. The second chapter provides a literature review on topics related to digital transformation, AI, B2B selling, automation and human-AI collaboration and highlights the research gap filled by this research. The third chapter details the descriptive, qualitative and secondary research methodology used in this research. The fourth chapter illustrates the results obtained from literature review and provides a comparison of AI-powered sales development processes in selected firms. The fifth chapter analyses these results against the research aims and theories, and formulates an AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in business-to-business (B2B) sales can be considered as another step in the digital transformation of sales companies. Technology use in sales has moved from simple sales force automation and CRM to more advanced and intelligent technologies capable of analyzing data, finding patterns, creating recommendations and helping in decision making (Lopes da Costa et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2019). Moreover, the use of such technologies is especially valuable for enterprise sales as processes in this sphere are characterized by complex client needs, numerous stakeholders and large amounts of both organizational and client information, which forces sales organizations to use digital tools to improve such activities as prospecting, client information, engagement, forecasting and relationships (Mahlamäki et al., 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2021). 28 articles, which were used as a basis for the literature review for this paper, are focused on topics of AI, B2B sales, digital transformation, sales automation, CRM, sales development and human-AI collaboration and are presented below in a thematic order.

2.2 Digital Transformation of B2B and Enterprise Sales

Enterprise sales has always involved interpersonal interaction, skills and knowledge of the salesperson, as well as direct interaction between the sales person and organisation buyers; however, the rise in the complexity of the buying process in B2B transactions prompted the use of technology to make sales operations more efficient and effective. Singh et al. (2019) prove that technological development does not

concern the automation of individual processes but touches the very essence of the field of sales, whereas Mahlamäki et al. (2020) reveal that the use of tools for sales-force automation gave salespeople much more access to information about organisations and prospects. The COVID-19 period contributed to the transformation: Rangarajan et al. (2021) study the phenomenon of B2B selling in the post-pandemic environment and highlight the necessity of developing the adaptive sales force.

Kusuma et al. (2024) explore the factors impacting digital transformation in sales organizations and conclude that success relies on the readiness, capabilities, resources, and acceptance by employees rather than the presence of technologies themselves. Similarly, Belaid and Ben Moallem (2026), conducting qualitative research, prove that the process of digital transformation in B2B sales is linked to transformations in sales performance and not to the technology adoption per se. Overall, these papers suggest that digital transformation requires change in not only the technological landscape but also in the manner in which sales professionals conduct their activities and was instrumental in forming most of the technology behind the adoption of AI. This implies that the development of enterprise sales could be perceived as a shift from relationship selling to digital sales, then to data-driven sales and, finally, to AI-enabled sales – an evolution crucial to understand the development of SDRs as the importance of high volume outreach is superseded by the need to find relevant accounts and start conversations with them.

2.3 Artificial Intelligence in B2B Sales

The use of AI is another step forward in the digital transformation because this technology can analyze significant amounts of structured and unstructured data, detect patterns and help make decisions beyond conventional automation. The impact of AI on commercial management as well as its ability to affect commercial decision making is reviewed by Lopes da Costa et al. (2020), whereas De Bruyn et al. (2020) discuss not only the benefits but also risks that are related to adopting AI technology in marketing and that can be applied to sales as well. Literature exploring the application of artificial intelligence in the B2B sales area has increased significantly over the last few years. Rodríguez and Peterson (2024) create the conceptual framework for analyzing the application of AI in B2B sales process and its effect on sales process performance, administrative efficiency and customer-related performance; however, according to their review, only 13 studies of all 79 that discussed AI application in the field of sales were dedicated to B2B sales. Fischer et al. (2022) further elaborate on this position by assessing the effect of AI on the B2B sales process in general. Overall, it is safe to say that the above-reviewed literature proves the ability of AI to affect such aspects as sales process effectiveness, administration, customer knowledge, sales productivity, decision making, and customer engagement.

2.4 Applications of AI in the B2B Sales Funnel

The most significant theme discussed in the literature is the application of AI at different stages of the sales funnel. Fehrenbach et al. (2025) explore AI applications at the different stages of the B2B sales funnel, while Paschen et al. (2020) explore how human and AI abilities create value through the B2B sales funnel, asserting that AI has the ability to change the inherently human-based process into one where large amounts of data are turned into relevant information and knowledge for selling. There are four main applications in particular that emerge from the literature.

At the stage of prospecting and account research, increasingly AI-based processes are being used instead of manual information gathering from multiple sources, which was the hallmark of prospecting in the past. A practical investigation of SDR processes and commercial sales intelligence systems (Magomadov, 2025) discusses the best practice for use of tools like Lusha in SDR operations, demonstrating how sales intelligence is an intermediary step between prospecting and account research powered by AI.

Concerning lead qualification and prioritisation, artificial intelligence and machine learning can be used to make decisions on which accounts and leads require more focus by discovering patterns from historical and contemporary customer data. According to Rohaan et al. (2022), the application of supervised machine learning in B2B sales forecasting has been shown, giving an idea of how machine learning could be applied in solving predictive problems in sales, although a similar approach can be used in prioritising leads in sales development; however, the use of AI should only be seen as decision support and not removal of the decision-making process.

Regarding sales engagement and personalisation, AI can be used to process information related to the industry and previous interactions of the prospect organisation to enable sales people go beyond general engagement to engagement that is relevant to the situation. Koch (2024), through a case study of cold outreach augmented by AI, shows one way AI can be used in outbound sales activities. However, AI personalisation is not synonymous to good engagement because the relevance of the information used matters.

When talking about sales forecasting, the usage of artificial intelligence is expected to increase the company's capability to use past and present data when predicting future events (Rohaan et al., 2022). Thus, we see the shift from a sales forecasting process that relies primarily on the salesperson's experience. Forecasting models are still bound by the quality of the data used. As a result, such models should be viewed as support for decisions, rather than a tool that completely replaces managerial intuition. Finally, CRM systems play a crucial role in AI-assisted sales: Saura et al. (2021) explore AI-assisted CRM in B2B digital marketing, focusing on the increasing role of customer information management and decision support through the use of AI, and Rusthollikarhu et al. (2022) continue the conversation regarding B2B customers' journey.

2.5 Sales Automation and the Shifting Role of the SDR

The rise in significance of sales automation has come as businesses try to become more productive and deal with complicated sales processes. In their article, Hildebrand and Bergner (2019) look at sales automation through chatbots as an initial use of AI in dealing with customers, whereas Storbacka and Storbacka (2022) analyze the emergence of scalable sales automation and the need to build a revenue engine. Moreover, Skiera (2022) explores the interaction between marketing technology and sales technology. Collectively, these articles indicate that successful sales automation involves the coordination of marketing technology, sales technology, CRM technology, data, and organizational tasks.

This holds some specific relevance for the SDR role too. Traditional SDR processes can be understood to include activities such as prospecting, researching, reaching out, following up, qualifying leads, and generating meetings – as automation is applied to the information-intensive and repetitive aspects of the SDR process, the future role of the SDR will focus more on account intelligence, context understanding, personalising outreach, engaging stakeholders, qualifying leads, and opportunity development. Singh et al. (2019) explain the implications of digitalisation and AI technologies for the sales industry, while Terho et al. (2022) further support this point by looking into inside sales and the SDR function in managing lead funnels effectively. Hence, in summary, the future SDR can be seen to be an AI-powered salesperson who employs technology to increase the depth of research and improve prioritisation and communication, as opposed to just increasing outreach.

2.6 Human-AI Collaboration and Organisation Capability

One key point which emerges from the review is that the future of AI-driven sales will not be characterised by automation alone, but instead that value will derive from collaboration between human beings and

intelligent systems. The idea of collaborative intelligence is explored by Paschen et al. (2020), who analyse the role of AI and human salespeople within each stage of the B2B sales funnel and identify the importance of complementing each other's strengths in order to achieve maximum potential – AI processes large amounts of data, detects patterns and predictions, retrieves information, automates actions, and provides recommendations, while human salespeople are empathic, communicate effectively, exercise judgement, negotiate, build relationships, make contextual sense and create trust. This creates an excellent basis for understanding the nature of AI as a tool for augmentation rather than replacement. An additional aspect is introduced by Hall et al. (2021), who explore salespeople's intentions to utilise AI feedback in B2B sales and demonstrate that mere existence of AI alone does not guarantee its effective application – salespeople have to find value in the tool and incorporate it into their practice.

AI success also depends on organisational capabilities in addition to technological considerations. For example, Mikalef et al. (2021) study the use of AI for enabling B2B marketing from a dynamic capability micro-foundations point of view, which involves looking beyond the technology itself to organisational capabilities to extract value from such technology, while Mikalef et al. (2023) look at AI capabilities from a B2B marketing capabilities viewpoint. Hautamäki and Heikinheimo (2025) also look at capabilities of sales managers as well as organisational knowledge processes to exploit the full potential of AI in B2B sales. Data management, AI related knowledge, skills of employees, managerial capability, technology integration, organisational learning, and change management constitute the organisational capabilities needed for extracting value from AI investment.

AI may also change the relationship between the buyer, seller, and the technology itself: Paschen et al. (2021) explore how AI and value co-creation are linked in B2B sales from the standpoint of interplay of activities, actors, and resources, claiming that value creation is done as a result of the interactions of the organisation, its salespeople, customers, and the technologies used — the theory that backs up the trend towards consultative selling and contextual selling in enterprise technology marketplaces.

There are several theoretical frameworks that can help understand this transformation. One of them is the dynamic capabilities framework, which is used by Mikalef et al. (2021) to help explain why organisations with equal opportunities to use AI technology may have different results depending on how successfully they integrate it into the processes of the organisation. Another one is collaborative-intelligence framework of Paschen et al. (2020). The technology adoption approach, from the literature surrounding the digital sales transformation, also highlights the significance of technology acceptance, organizational readiness, and usefulness (Kusuma et al., 2024; Hall et al., 2021). All of these approaches together emphasize the point that AI sales development will be successful only through the collaboration of technological capability, organizational capability, and human capability.

2.7 Issues and Risks in Adopting AI

Though potentially beneficial, literature highlights several issues related to adopting AI in the sales process. Firstly, De Bruyn et al. (2020) note that AI application in marketing has opportunities as well as drawbacks which is true for sales since AI-driven recommendations may impact significant commercial decisions. The quality of AI system depends on good and relevant data, therefore, bad or old CRM data may generate wrong recommendations; the excessive use of automation may devalue the authenticity of customer interaction especially since enterprise buyers react negatively towards standardized machine generated messages; AI-generated outputs need appropriate interpretation, especially in case of complex business environments where the context may be lost due to lack of relevant data; collecting and processing customer information creates issues of privacy, transparency, and proper usage of this

information; and finally, resistance, unpreparedness or lack of skills may hinder the adoption of AI in sales even in case of appropriate technologies.

2.8 Research Gaps and Conceptual Framework

The existing literature provides rich data regarding the use of AI in marketing and business-to-business sales, but there are still several gaps that are related to the current research project. First, most of the existing literature studies individual uses of AI – either forecasting, CRM, automation, chatbots or lead management – whereas the broader evolution of enterprise sales development as an organizational function has not received adequate attention. Second, although research on B2B sales in general has been well-developed, there has not been enough synthesis regarding the transformation of the Sales Development Representative function and hence the movement from activity-based prospecting to intelligence and context-based engagement deserves more consideration. Third, the discussion about the possibilities of AI is quite rich but the relationship between AI, sales intelligence, human decision-making and context in the process of enterprise sales development requires further analysis. Finally, the topic of organizational adoption of AI is usually studied either from technological or capability perspectives, and hence it is important to combine them to examine the way how organizations can implement AI in their sales development process. Thirdly, Rodríguez and Peterson (2024) point out that relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the issue of AI in the context of B2B sales. The current research fills the gaps mentioned above through the process of synthesis of available literature and comparative analysis of evidence found in selected business companies in order to develop a comprehensive view of how sales development of enterprises develops and how AI can help sales-development professionals.

From this review, the development of enterprise sales may be conceptualized as an evolutionary path from activity-based to intelligence-based and contextual selling through account discovery, account intelligence, intent discovery, stakeholder discovery, contextual personalization, multi-channel engagement, consultative dialogue, and value mapping, ending finally in opportunity creation. Artificial intelligence may assist in several aspects of this process through information processing, pattern recognition, and recommendation, whereas human sales representatives still have to interpret information, build relationships, and establish trust, which is a conceptualization in agreement with the collaborative-intelligence framework of Paschen et al. (2020).

To summarise, it can be stated that the existing literature shows that there is currently taking place a dramatic shift in the realm of enterprise sales development due to digitalisation and the use of AI, which leads to the transition from the traditional models of sales based on relationships and activities to increasingly technology-based models, including prospecting, qualification, personalisation, forecasting, CRM, automation, and customer journey management (Fehrenbach et al., 2025; Rodríguez & Peterson, 2024). Yet, it becomes apparent in the literature review that it is not only the technology that influences the effectiveness of sales: organisational capabilities, employees' willingness to use new technologies, data quality, and human judgement play their roles as well (Hall et al., 2021; Mikalef et al., 2021; Hautamäki & Heikinheimo, 2025). In other words, this finding proves the validity of the initial assumption, according to which enterprise sales development is becoming a process based on AI and personalisation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Approach and Philosophy

Research methodology refers to the system through which a research problem is studied and the research objectives are met. The current research is grounded on secondary research, as there was no data collection

through surveys, interviews, questionnaires, experiments, and observations in organisational settings. On the contrary, the current research involves synthesis of data from credible secondary sources such as academic research articles, organisational publications, industry reports and others (George, 2024). Considering the research objective of examining the emergence, features, applications and implications of AI in enterprise sales development, the approach of descriptive qualitative secondary research was deemed appropriate.

The research follows a descriptive design as its purpose is to structure an understanding of how enterprise sales development has evolved along with digitalization and use of AI, how AI can be used in different stages of B2B selling process, how the SDR position evolves and what approaches the selected business organizations follow in relation to AI-assisted sales development. This study adopts a qualitative and inductive method of research that starts with the observation found in the literature review and organizational context and then proceeds to draw broad themes and interpretations out of these observations - from the identification of themes, comparing findings, observing patterns, interpreting the evolution of sales development of enterprises and developing the proposed AI-Enabled Contextual Selling Framework. The methodology adopted for this study is similar to the method used in qualitative secondary research where existing documentation is analyzed to find themes and patterns (Largan & Morris, 2019). The research philosophy of the study is interpretivism, which is a suitable approach for investigating the way AI is transforming the sales process, role assignments within organizations, and human-technology relations through interpretations derived from previous studies, rather than through statistical analysis. Interpretivism is especially useful for analyzing topics such as human-AI cooperation, new SDR duties, contextual selling, personalization, and organizational AI capabilities, since these are issues that relate to organizational processes and human interpretation and cannot therefore be comprehensively understood through numerical analysis alone.

3.2 Nature and Type of Research

This research can be characterized along the following axes:

Research Dimension	Classification
Nature of research	Descriptive
Research approach	Qualitative and inductive
Research philosophy	Interpretivist
Data type	Secondary
Research method	Literature-based secondary research
Analysis method	Thematic and comparative analysis
Primary data collection	Not conducted
Statistical hypothesis testing	Not conducted
Organisational analysis	Comparative analysis based on published evidence

This research is not a primary empirical research because its contribution lies in systematic organization, synthesis, and interpretation of the available knowledge regarding AI-enabled enterprise sales development.

3.3 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Four types of secondary data sources will be considered in the course of this research. Academic journals that have undergone peer review serve as a foundation of the primary literature. The topics covered include applications of AI in B2B sales, digital transformation, sales automation, CRM powered by AI, B2B customer journey, human-AI collaboration, sales development, and sales forecasting; this paper is based on a set of 28 articles provided to us. Publicly available organizational literature, which includes annual reports, information about technologies and products released by companies and their corporate case studies, will be used when it is deemed appropriate to examine how the chosen companies apply or position AI in sales and customer engagement. Industry reports and professional publications will also be used in order to supplement academic literature, especially when it comes to recent developments that are not extensively discussed in academic literature.

Selection criteria for the sources include relevance to the research objectives in the sense that the source has a direct or relevant relationship with any one of the following areas: artificial intelligence (AI), B2B sales, sales development, digital transformation, customer relationship management (CRM), sales automation, or human-AI collaboration; preference for academic sources; special attention to sources which have addressed AI applications in the B2B sales process or organisational capability issues and human aspects related to the implementation of AI; and sources which have covered changes in the roles of salespeople.

3.4 Business Organisations Selected for Comparative Analysis

Along with the literature review, the study also contains a comparison of four business organisations, for which enough secondary information about the use of AI in sales or customer engagement is publicly available: Salesforce, HubSpot, Microsoft (Dynamics 365), and Gong. The reason for selection of these organisations is their considerable amount of publicly available, verifiable data concerning their AI-enabled sales capabilities – including SEC filings, official product documentation and independent reviews from the industry – regarding AI implementation in sales, sales intelligence, CRM, sales automation, personalization, lead management, customer engagement and human-AI cooperation. In line with the descriptive nature of the study, the comparison is descriptive rather than evaluative: it does not aim to compare different business organisations and find out which one has the most successful AI implementation, but simply aims at discovering common features and differences between them with the help of publicly available and verifiable information.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

This research employs thematic analysis and comparative analysis to analyze the secondary data. In the process of thematic analysis, recurring themes such as concept, practices, and patterns in regard to the evolution of B2B sales, digital transformation, AI adoption, AI-based prospecting, lead qualification, sales automation, personalisation, AI-based CRM, sales forecasting, man-machine interaction, shifting responsibilities of SDRs, organization's AI capability, AI adoption difficulties, and contextual selling are identified and analyzed in the light of the literature. Comparative analysis will then be performed on the findings that pertain to the selected organizations, examining any similarities in AI adoption, differences in application areas, sales development practices, new organizational capabilities, changes in sales responsibilities, and challenges related to implementation of AI.

This analysis is built on a clear four-step model, beginning with Traditional Enterprise Sales Development (prospecting, cold calls, relationship management, and lead qualification), followed by Digital Sales Development (CRM, sales intelligence, digital outreach, and sales automation), and then progressing to

AI-Enabled Sales Development (AI prospecting, predictive qualification, personalization, AI-enabled CRM, and forecasting) and finally to Contextual Enterprise Selling (account intelligence, intent discovery, contextual engagement, consultative selling, and value mapping). This model, illustrated in the table below, allows the analysis to go beyond the use of technologies and look at the transformation of the sales development process as well, which provides the basis for presenting results in Chapter 4.

Traditional Sales Development → Digital Sales Development → AI-Enabled Sales Development → Contextual Enterprise Selling

3.6 Reliability, Ethical Issues and Limitations

Because the research does not collect any primary data, reliability will be largely based on the quality of secondary sources used for the research. Peer-reviewed academic sources will act as the major scholarly source, while organizational and industry publications will serve as contextually relevant and practical sources. Usage of a variety of sources covering similar topics allows for cross-verification, reducing dependence on any single source or statement by organizations. In qualitative secondary research of such kind, special attention should be paid to the quality, relevance, and source of the document that acts as research data (Largan & Morris, 2019). The research does not involve participation of humans, conducting interviews or surveys, or collecting personal information; all the data is collected using published and publicly available sources, scholarly sources are cited appropriately, secondary data is not presented as the primary one.

A number of limitations, however, need to be considered when interpreting the results. The lack of primary data means that the study cannot speak to the experiences or perceptions of SDRs, sales managers or customers directly. Availability and quality of the published research determines the degree of attention paid to particular areas, so regions with poor academic output receive less coverage. The findings that are published tend to be the significant ones or the successes in terms of implementation, since failures of AI implementation are less likely to appear in the public domain. Organisations do not normally share information on their internal sales processes, proprietary algorithms of AI models used and conversion rate, and so any organisation comparisons are done based on the publicly available evidence and cannot be considered a reflection of the full reality inside the organisation. Also, because of the rapid development of AI technologies and their uses, the findings related to particular tools and processes can become out of date as the organisations introduce new AI solutions. In addition, because of the chosen methodology and scope of this research, it is not possible to consider the findings as statistically representative of all enterprise organisations or industries. Nevertheless, secondary research can be considered an adequate foundation for descriptive research.

In conclusion, this research follows a descriptive, qualitative, inductive, and interpretive approach that solely relies on secondary data, whereby academic research forms the main source of evidence, while thematic and comparative analyses are used in detecting recurring themes from the literature and organizations under consideration. The research does not seek to prove any causal relationships or hypotheses through statistical tests; rather, it gives an evidence-based and structured depiction of how AI is changing enterprise sales development, how the function of sales development is evolving, and how organizations can effectively use both artificial intelligence and human knowledge for enterprise selling.

4. RESULTS OF SECONDARY RESEARCH AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the results resulting from the analysis of the selected secondary literature and

publicly available organisational evidence. As the research in question is based on the secondary research only, the results are represented by the patterns discovered in the process of secondary literature analysis and publicly available organisational evidence analysis. The analysis is based on the main topics revealed in Chapter 2 and includes the evolution of B2B sales development, the role of AI throughout the sales funnel, sales automation, personalisation, AI-based CRM systems, human-AI cooperation, changes in the role of SDRs, organisational capabilities, and difficulties associated with AI implementation. Generally speaking, it can be concluded that sales development in enterprises evolves from the activity-oriented model into the intelligence-, personalisation-, and context-oriented one, in which AI accelerates information processing, improves the prospects' prioritization, allows personalisation, automates routine activities, and offers decision-making assistance, while human judgement and relational skills are still required in complicated B2B selling (Paschen et al., 2020; Rodríguez & Peterson, 2024).

4.2 The Evolution of Enterprise Sales Development

According to the analysis, the evolution of enterprise sales development has gone through three stages that are illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Evolution of Enterprise Sales Development

Dimension	Traditional	Digital	AI-Enabled
Prospecting	Manual research	Digital databases and CRM	AI-assisted account intelligence
Lead identification	Personal networks	Sales intelligence platforms	Predictive identification
Outreach	Generic calls/emails	Email automation, multi-channel	AI-assisted personalisation
Lead qualification	Manual judgement	Rule-based scoring	Predictive, AI-assisted scoring
CRM	Record keeping	Centralised database	AI-enabled customer intelligence
Forecasting	Experience-driven	CRM-based reporting	Machine-learning-supported
SDR orientation	Activity volume	Activity + conversion	Relevance and opportunity potential

In the traditional system, the process was highly dependent on manual lead generation, sales rep experience, and personal connections. Digital transformation has involved the use of CRM systems, sales force automation, sales intelligence, and digital communication (Mahlamäki et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2019). AI is a new step in this process since today the systems not only gather information but also analyze it and provide insights. Rodríguez and Peterson (2024) consider the role of AI in different aspects of B2B sales process, while Fehrenbach et al. (2025) look into the applications of AI along the whole sales funnel.

The transformation process may be illustrated by the transition from manual execution through digital enablement and data-based decision support to AI-enabled execution and contextual selling.

4.3 Major AI Applications in Enterprise Sales Development

The literature highlights several key areas where AI has an impact on enterprise sales development, which can be found in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Major AI Applications in Sales Development

AI Application	Sales Development Activity	Potential Contribution
Account intelligence	Prospect research	Faster, deeper understanding of accounts
Predictive lead scoring	Lead qualification	Prioritisation of high-potential prospects
Sales intelligence	Prospect identification	Identification of relevant organisations
Generative AI	Content and outreach	Faster personalised communication
AI-enabled CRM	Customer management	Integrated customer and account insight
Predictive analytics	Forecasting	Improved decision support
Sales automation	Repetitive activities	Increased sales productivity
Customer journey analytics	Engagement	Better understanding of customer behaviour
Conversational AI	Customer interaction	Automated responses and support

According to Fehrenbach et al. (2025), AI applications are used through different stages of the B2B sales funnel instead of one particular function. Similarly, Rodríguez and Peterson (2024) identify different applications within the B2B sales process, which means that AI should be considered as an ecosystem of capabilities and not just a sales technology. In the area of prospecting and account intelligence, which is considered the most transformed area, digital sales-intelligence platforms already make much of the manual work done to collect information about the prospects and companies unnecessary. AI goes even further in automating the processing of large amounts of information (Magomadov, 2025), thus helping salespeople identify relevant companies, decision makers, organizational changes and buying signals; hence, the significant shift here is not just faster prospecting, but more informed prospecting, as the value of an SDR is determined by his ability to understand the relevance of an account rather than just its presence.

Concerning lead qualification and prioritization, AI-powered systems capitalize on the prior work of rule-based scoring methods by discovering patterns in historical data; this is illustrated by the application of supervised machine learning for B2B sales forecasting by Rohaan et al. (2022). This does not mean that

human involvement is no longer needed, especially in case of larger enterprise accounts when the purchase decision is based on organizational change and strategic initiatives; therefore, the newly formed approach is best described as AI-based prioritization in combination with human qualification, not as AI-based prioritization replacing qualification. With regard to personalized outreach, AI technology allows integrating such factors as industry, company attributes, job function, business objectives, and recent organizational initiatives into outbound communications (Koch, 2024); hence, personalization becomes more about understanding prospects' business context rather than just addressing the prospect by his name. As for CRM and customer journey management, Saura et al. (2021) and Rustholkar et al. (2022) state that the CRM's current function is moving beyond being a record-keeping administrative system and evolving into an intelligent environment capable of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and making recommendations; hence, the role of the SDR includes a more complete picture of the account view.

4.4 Sales Automation and Evolution of SDR's Role

Sales automation tools have proven to be very useful in performing tasks that are repetitive in nature, information intensive and structured in nature, such as data entry, research on prospects, enrichment of leads, drafting emails, follow-ups, scheduling meetings, scoring leads, and reporting (Hildebrand & Bergner, 2019; Storbacka & Storbacka, 2022; Skiera, 2022). With increasing technological intervention in performing these activities, the value of an SDR's time is getting increasingly linked to judgement, context, communication, and relationship-building – value creation through a different approach to SDR's job. This is evident from the evolving skill set listed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Changing SDR Capability Requirements

Traditional Capability	Emerging Capability
Cold calling	Contextual communication
Manual research	AI-assisted research
List building	Account prioritisation
Generic email writing	AI-assisted personalisation
Activity management	Opportunity management
Product pitching	Business-value communication
Basic CRM usage	AI-enabled CRM interpretation
Individual judgement	Human–AI decision-making
Volume orientation	Relevance orientation

As discussed by Singh et al. (2019), the consequences of digitization and AI in the field of sales are far-reaching, and according to Terho et al. (2022), the importance of sales development in managing the lead-funnel process cannot be underestimated. Thus, it can be concluded that the new job title of an SDR presupposes not only the development of the sales skill set but also the acquisition of AI literacy.

4.5 Human-AI Collaboration and Organisational Capabilities

There is abundant support in the literature for the necessity of human-AI collaboration. According to Paschen et al. (2020), there is an overlap of capabilities between AI and human salespeople: specifically, in terms of speed, scale, information processing, pattern recognition, forecasting, repetition, and information searching, AI surpasses human beings, while in empathy, trust, negotiating, building relationships, context, complex communication and managing ambiguity, humans are still superior. It can be concluded from the literature that AI cannot be considered as merely a substitute for salespeople, since the former adds information and analytics capability to the latter who adds human context for transforming information into customer value. Hall et al. (2021) emphasize the necessity of salespeople's adoption and application of feedback provided by AI.

Another observation that can be made based on the study conducted by Mikalef et al. (2021, 2023) is that the implementation of artificial intelligence is not just a matter of technology itself. According to their research, an organisation needs data, technology, human, managerial, process, and change capabilities to make its investment in AI pay off; while Hautamäki and Heikinheimo (2025) stress the need for sales managers' capabilities and organisational knowledge processes. This means that it would be wise for any **organisation not to view AI implementation only as procurement.**

4.6 Challenges Linked with AI-Driven Sales Development

The secondary sources have also revealed that there is a common set of challenges linked with the adoption of AI, which has been presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Key Challenges of AI in Enterprise Sales

Challenge	Implication
Poor data quality	Incorrect or misleading recommendations
Over-automation	Reduced authenticity of customer interactions
AI errors or hallucinations	Potentially inaccurate customer information
Lack of employee skills	Underutilisation of AI capabilities
Resistance to adoption	Slow integration into sales workflows
Privacy concerns	Risks associated with customer data
Lack of organisational readiness	Difficulty integrating AI into existing processes
Overdependence on technology	Reduction in human judgement
Rapid technological change	Continuous need for learning and adaptation

De Bruyn et al. (2020) explain that adopting AI has its pros and cons, and it appears from the current research that AI is not only about automating activities but also about enhancing decision-making, relevance to the customers, sales efficiency, and the quality of human-customer engagement.

4.7 Comparative Analysis of Selected Business Organizations

Along with thematic literature results, the research also involved the review of publicly available secondary data for four enterprise organizations that use AI-enabled sales techniques and have

considerable amounts of public information regarding these techniques: Salesforce, HubSpot, Microsoft (Dynamics 365), and Gong. These organizations were chosen due to their public, verifiable sources regarding the usage of AI-enabled sales capabilities in seven similar aspects: AI-enabled sales capabilities, CRM and customer intelligence, sales automation, personalization, sales intelligence, human-AI cooperation, and key organizational capabilities. The comparative analysis is presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Comparative Framework for Selected Organisations

Dimension	Salesforce	HubSpot	Microsoft (Dynamics 365)	Gong
AI-enabled sales capabilities	Agentforce autonomous agents for lead qualification, opportunity management, and case routing	Breeze AI agents (Prospecting, Customer, Data) on outcome-based pricing	Copilot Sales Agent embedded across Dynamics 365, Outlook, and Teams	Revenue AI OS built on proprietary models trained on customer interactions
CRM / customer intelligence	Data Cloud unifies customer records; Einstein Trust Layer governs data use	Smart CRM with built-in Breeze Intelligence data enrichment	Dynamics 365 CRM grounded with Microsoft 365 email and meeting signals	Revenue Graph links calls, emails, and meetings to CRM records
Sales automation	End-to-end agent workflows from lead qualification to opportunity management	Prospecting Agent automates account research and outreach drafting	Automated CRM updates and next-best-action recommendations	Automated post-call CRM updates and deal-risk flagging
Personalisation	Generative AI drafts personalised emails grounded in CRM context	Hyper-personalised outbound emails generated from buying-signal data	Copilot drafts context-aware email replies using deal history	Limited; platform emphasis is conversation analysis, not message generation
Sales intelligence	Einstein predictive lead and opportunity scoring with automated insights	Breeze Intelligence buyer-intent tracking and firmographic enrichment	Sales Research Agent answers natural-language pipeline queries	Conversation intelligence: talk ratios, objections, competitor mentions

Dimension	Salesforce	HubSpot	Microsoft (Dynamics 365)	Gong
Human–AI collaboration	Agents operate under the same permission model as human users	Audit Cards log agent actions for rep and manager review	Agent surfaces insights; seller retains final decision and action	Value depends on managers actively coaching reps from call data
Key organisational capability	Unified, governed data platform (Data Cloud) with a trust layer	Single CRM data foundation supporting outcome-based agent pricing	Cross-suite integration across CRM and productivity tools	Managerial adoption and coaching discipline, per independent reviews

As per the nature of the methodology used, the purpose of the comparison is not to provide a ranking list but to reveal common patterns of enterprise organizations regarding how they use AI in sales and customer engagement.

Six key trends stand out across all four companies and the literature. Firstly, AI technology is becoming integrated throughout the sales funnel rather than being limited to just one step. Salesforce Agentforce, HubSpot Breeze agents, and Copilot for Sales from Microsoft all integrate prospecting, qualification, and opportunity management on a single platform, which corresponds with the trend of AI integration in the entire sales funnel described in the literature (Fehrenbach et al., 2025; Rodríguez & Peterson, 2024). Secondly, sales intelligence is becoming an integral part of sales development. Salesforce, HubSpot, and Microsoft integrate predictive scoring or natural language analysis of the pipeline right into their CRMs, whereas Gong uses the same approach but applies it to conversation data, getting such analytics as talk ratios, objections, and competitors from the calls. Thirdly, personalization of sales messaging is becoming more context-based as the companies use generative AI to create messages based on CRM data. However, according to Gong's findings, this trend is not universally implemented yet. Automation is reorienting the roles of both SDRs and sellers from entering raw data manually to analysing and building relationships, most obviously demonstrated in the case of HubSpot, whose new pricing for agents is result-based, charging for agents only when they create a qualified lead or a resolved interaction, not just for raw activity. Yet the human element remains essential in framing the value of the offer in the eyes of every provider: Salesforce makes it clear that its agents work under the same permission model as humans; Microsoft presents its Sales Agent as providing insights while giving the seller the final act; in turn, independent reviews of Gong make it evident that the real value of its offer is contingent on the manager using insights provided by the system as a coach for action — all these points are consistent with the complementary capabilities approach in the relevant literature (Paschen et al., 2020). Lastly, organisational capability proves to be more important for value extraction than the technology itself: Salesforce, for example, highlights data unification and governance (its Data Cloud and Einstein Trust Layer) as the prerequisite of its agents in its filings, and reviews of Gong always credit ROI to managerial adoption

discipline — all these are consistent with the capability approach in the relevant literature (Mikalef et al., 2021, 2023).

4.8 Summary of Key Findings

The first and foremost key finding in this study is the transition from activity-based sales, which is assessed by the number of calls, emails, contacts made, and meetings scheduled, to contextual sales, which are concerned with the account relevance, context, engagement quality, opportunity potential, and business value. It does not mean that there is no need for any kind of activity metrics; however, activities may be more and more assisted by technology, while human attention may be focused on those tasks, where context and judgement bring in the most valuable results. In summary, the analysis of secondary literature and organisational evidence has revealed that enterprise sales development is experiencing a structural shift driven by digitalisation and AI; AI impacts various stages of the sales funnel in B2B; sales intelligence and contextual personalisation become key components of customer engagement; AI decreases the dependency on manual repetitive activity, providing opportunities for increased productivity; the SDR position moves from activity-based prospecting to intelligence- and consulting-based engagement; the collaborative mode of human-AI interaction is preferred to the replacement approach due to the complementary skills of AI and human experts (Paschen et al., 2020); organisational capabilities are vital for a successful adoption; and finally, there are challenges of data quality, automation issues, privacy concerns, and organisational readiness related to adoption. In general, all these findings point out to the transition in enterprise sales development towards contextual selling, where the intelligence powered by AI is supplemented with human expertise; and they form the basis for discussion in Chapter 5.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The results discussed in Chapter 4 indicate that the usage of Artificial Intelligence leads to a drastic transformation of the process of enterprise sales development in a way that goes far beyond the automation of its components and includes the identification of prospects, analysis of information about customers, prioritisation, personalisation of interactions, relationship management, and allocation of the time of sales professionals. This chapter interprets the findings in light of the research aims and existing literature and formulates the core practical contribution of the study in the form of the proposed framework for AI-Driven Contextual Selling. Throughout, the discussion interprets the process of enterprise sales development as evolving through three distinct stages, i.e., traditional sales development, digital sales development, and AI-enabled contextual sales development, where AI converts vast amounts of data into usable information and knowledge within the entire B2B sales funnel, and human sales professionals continue to offer their expertise, relationship management, and contextual comprehension (Paschen et al., 2020).

5.2 AI as an Enabler: Interpreting the Evolution

One of the most prominent messages emerging from the literature review is the idea that AI needs to be interpreted mainly as an enabler for sales professionals, not their substitute. Paschen et al. (2020) specifically consider complementary roles played by human professionals and AI within different stages of the B2B sales funnel. In particular, the former are better at building trust, comprehending the complex context, negotiating, showing empathy, handling uncertainty, and developing relationships, whereas AI excels at analysing vast amounts of information, recognising patterns in it, predicting outcomes, automating repetitive tasks, and retrieving the needed information. Thus, the findings obtained in the

course of the research contradict the simplistic assumption that AI would replace sales professionals completely. Instead, it can be argued that AI changes what sales professionals do and, in this respect, transforms the process of sales development into increasingly digital, data-driven, intelligent, and finally, contextual one. The core advantage of AI in the process of selling should not be limited to reduction of the workload of sales professionals but should also include improvement of the quality of information used by them to make decisions.

5.3 The SDR Role Transformation and the Transition from Personalisation to Contextualisation

One of the major implications of the study is the change of the SDR role. In the past, SDRs were evaluated based on activity-based KPIs such as the number of calls, emails, prospects contacted, and meetings made. The development of AI for sales allows transitioning to account intelligence and contextualisation, where SDRs interpret the results of AI, detect business triggers and key stakeholders, personalise their communication, assess AI-recommended strategies, make discovery calls and qualify opportunities based on data and intuition. It is an example of the transition from activity to intelligence and, especially, is very important in enterprise sales, as volume may lead to activity but not necessarily to opportunity creation. Thus, in the future, SDR success will be highly dependent on AI literacy and sales acumen.

This point leads to the next finding – the evolving meaning of personalisation itself. In the traditional sense, personalisation was mostly about some changes in sales communication, such as using the prospect's name, company's name or job title. AI allows sales people to use much more information, such as organisational events, business priorities, industry trends and previous communication. It means the transition from personal communication to the truly contextual one that proves the understanding of why the current situation makes certain solutions relevant. This conclusion corresponds with the literature about value co-creation via AI: according to Paschen et al. (2021), value is created by human/non-human interactions, activities and resources, thus in the future the value of AI personalisation will be measured in terms of the quality of context.

5.4 Productivity, The Trade-off Between Quality and Quantity, and Organisational Capabilities

According to the literature, AI can increase productivity through decreasing the amount of time needed for performing repetitive tasks that involve large amounts of information processing, including research on prospects, data enrichment, lead prioritization, writing emails, updating CRM, preparation for meetings, and forecasting. However, productivity cannot only be seen through the prism of time saved; productivity can be better understood as a combination of saving time, better prioritization, better knowledge of customers, and increased engagement; saving time is beneficial only when it is used for increasing customer engagement or developing opportunities. Accordingly, adoption of AI must go hand-in-hand with changes in sales processes and key performance indicators.

It brings us to yet another, related trade-off. Inbound sales development has historically been subject to a basic trade-off between quantity and quality: the higher the number of prospects reached out to, the less likely was their relevancy to the product. With AI, this trade-off becomes obsolete in the sense that the sales person will be able to process a much larger amount of information while maintaining a much higher level of relevancy; that is, sales development can move from the traditional high-volume, low-context, and generic engagement to large-scale intelligence, higher context, and highly relevant engagement. However, this benefit is not guaranteed since bad data, wrong output of AI, and overreliance on AI output can result in irrelevant communication even if the latter is very technologically advanced. Therefore, AI is not the way to overcome the trade-off between quality and quantity by itself; it gives companies the opportunity to increase scale without losing the same proportion of relevancy, provided that the right data,

processes, and human management are used; this statement aligns with the dynamic capabilities theory from Chapter 2. As Mikalef et al. (2021) demonstrate, the impact of AI is dependent on organizational capability rather than the technology itself, that is, even organizations using the same technologies can have vastly different results because of the different quality of data, employees' skills, management, technology integration, and change management capabilities. This explains why merely purchasing an AI-enabled CRM or sales intelligence solution does not guarantee improved performance: processes need to be redesigned and sales people need to acquire new skills to use the solution properly.

5.5 Human–AI Cooperation, Value Co-Creation and Managerial Implications

Moreover, the results also have implications for value co-creation. Paschen et al. (2021) analyse AI-assisted value co-creation in B2B sales from the standpoint of Service-Dominant Logic and note that AI itself is not the source of value creation; rather, AI detects the potential business signal, the salesperson makes sense of it and acts, the customer provides new data, both AI and the salesperson make sense of it, and adapt the solution accordingly so that value is co-created through interactions among technology, sales specialists, customers and organizational resources. In this way, the point about AI-assisted enterprise selling being socio-technical is supported, and it is directly implied that enterprise organizations should focus on AI applications that are value-producing: account research, lead prioritization, forecasting, CRM intelligence, meeting preparation, and administrative automation but not try to automate the whole process; realize that AI effectiveness is highly dependent on data quality and therefore implement data strategy along with an AI strategy; and recognize that although sales professionals will not have to become data scientists, they will still have to know how AI system recommends actions, how to evaluate these actions and how to combine them with human judgment.

This has implications on how sales process should be designed and managed. Merely adding AI into existing process will hardly create any value, and organizations have to decide consciously which activities should be automated, which augmented, which performed by humans and which approved by humans in order to build what can be called human-in-the-loop sales process. In this regard, sales managers play a particular role, their job now extends beyond monitoring the usage of the tools to define appropriate use cases of AI, develop the guidelines for its usage, train sales professionals, monitor the quality of AI outputs, maintain human control, set up proper metrics and handle the customer data properly so that the role of the sales manager itself changes and evolves into technology-enabled capability builder. This change also implies a shift in the metrics used for evaluating SDRs: activity-based metrics such as number of calls made, emails sent, prospects contacted and meetings scheduled stay relevant but lose their meaning when the volume of these activities is increased dramatically through the assistance of AI and thus should be supplemented with outcomes-based metrics (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: From Activity Metrics to Outcome Metrics

Traditional Metric	Emerging Metric
Number of calls	Quality of conversations
Number of emails	Engagement quality
Number of prospects	Account relevance
Meetings booked	Qualified opportunities

Traditional Metric	Emerging Metric
Activity volume	Opportunity progression / pipeline contribution

5.6 Proposal of the AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework

Based on the literature review and results from Chapter 4, the proposed framework in this research is an AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework where AI is viewed as a layer of intelligence and augmentation but not replacement of the salesperson. The framework, which is depicted in Figure 5.1, is built around the idea that AI creates the most significant potential value when its analytical capabilities are combined with human sales capabilities at nine stages.

Figure 5.1: AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework

1. Account Identification → 2. AI-Enabled Account Intelligence → 3. Intent & Trigger Identification 4. Stakeholder Mapping → 5. Contextual Personalisation → 6. Human-Led Engagement 7. AI-Assisted Qualification → 8. Consultative Value Mapping → 9. Opportunity Development

At the initial stage, the salesperson with the help of AI and digital sales-intelligence tools identifies organisations that satisfy the certain criteria and gathers relevant information about those organisations with the use of AI-enabled account intelligence. At the next step, AI helps the salesperson identify intent, meaning certain triggers indicating that the organisation might have a business requirement. Then the organisation's stakeholders are mapped out using stakeholder mapping tool. The information gathered with the use of those AI-enabled techniques serves as a basis for developing contextually relevant communications but the communication process itself is performed by the salesperson with his/her judgement, communication skills and relationship-building capabilities. After that, the salesperson uses AI to analyse the information gained during this interaction (AI-Assisted Qualification), but it is still the judgement of the salesperson that helps the salesperson understand how to connect the organisation's problem with a solution and map out the consultative value for the organisation. Finally, the qualified opportunity is being developed in the enterprise sales process. Overall, the logic of the whole framework could be summarised in the following way:

AI-Enabled Intelligence + Human Expertise + Customer Context = Contextual Enterprise Selling

5.7 Academic and Practical Contribution

Despite being merely descriptive and based on secondary data, the paper makes the following five contributions to the existing body of knowledge: unification of fragmented research that focuses on individual applications of AI such as CRM, forecasting, automation or lead management in the framework of enterprise sales development; moving focus away from technological capabilities of AI to influence sales professionals' activities and responsibilities; recognition of transition from volume-driven prospecting to intelligence-driven and contextual selling; application of the human-AI collaboration framework with its emphasis on creation of organisational value through the combination of capabilities of AI and human sales expertise as per collaborative-intelligence approach proposed by Paschen et al. (2020); and introduction of the AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework as a systematic approach to incorporating AI in the enterprise sales development process.

Findings of the paper have direct practical implications. Instead of measuring value of AI in the number of automated activities, companies should think about how AI can help sales professionals to get a better

understanding of their customers and spend more time on generating value for them. Based on the findings of the paper, companies should build a quality database of customer and accounts; incorporate AI with CRM and sales systems; automate routine activities, but keep humans involved in judgement and relationship-driven tasks; educate SDRs and sales managers on AI literacy; keep humans in charge of important customer decisions; apply AI to customer intelligence and prioritization, not only volume; focus on contextual rather than generic personalization; change metrics of performance to outcomes; evaluate accuracy and effectiveness of AI output; and view AI adoption as organisational transformation, not just acquisition of new software.

5.8 Limitations and Summary of the Discussion

It is important to consider the discussed interpretation against the limitations associated with the chosen research methodology. Specifically, the research is conducted based on secondary data only and, therefore, does not actually capture the perceptions of SDRs, sales managers, and enterprise customers; the publicly available organisational information may fail to reflect the full extent of AI implementation internally; the technology is rapidly evolving, and the specific applications and organisational practices may change in the future even after the completion of the study; and the research is descriptive and does not statistically prove the existence of causation between AI adoption and sales performance improvement.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the current discussion has revealed that AI is revolutionising the processes of enterprise sales development through its application in prospecting, account intelligence, qualification, personalisation, CRM, automation, forecasting, and customer engagement. However, the evidence collected does not support the idea that in the future, enterprise sales will become an area in which machines will replace sales professionals. Instead, the emerging model is one in which AI will assist salespeople in terms of scale, speed, intelligence, and automation, and sales professionals will help with judgement, context, trust, and relationship building. Thus, the central idea derived from the study could be formulated as follows: the future of enterprise sales development is not AI replacing the salesperson, but the AI-enabled salesperson replacing the traditional activity-based sales process.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of the Study

The present study investigated the influence of Artificial Intelligence on enterprise sales development through descriptive and qualitative synthesis of current literature and organisational information, not based on surveying, interviewing, or questionnaire studies. Traditionally, enterprise sales development was based on manual prospecting, experience, and relationship management, but with time, digital technologies have brought CRM tools, sales intelligence, and automation to sales development; then, AI came as yet another step forward in transforming sales development through prediction, analysis, generation, and intelligence in account intelligence, lead prioritisation, personalisation, forecasting, and decision-making (Paschen et al., 2020; Rodríguez & Peterson, 2024). A transition from activity-based sales development through data-driven sales development to AI-driven contextual sales development has been established, and the main conclusion of this study is that AI transforms sales development not in terms of automation of sales activities but in terms of transformation of sales development itself.

6.2 Conclusions Based on the Research Objectives

On the issue of evolution of enterprise sales development, it can be concluded that it has passed through traditional, digital, data-driven, AI-enabled, and contextual phases, transforming sales development from activity-driven to intelligence-driven process. On the issue of application of AI in enterprise sales

development, it can be concluded that AI is applied in account identification and research, sales intelligence, lead qualification and prioritisation, personalisation, CRM intelligence, sales automation, forecasting, customer journey analysis, and sales performance support (Fehrenbach et al., 2025; Rodríguez & Peterson, 2024).

As far as the evolution of the role of the SDR due to the introduction of AI is concerned, the research concludes that with AI performing the automation or acceleration of high-volume prospecting, cold outreach, and follow-ups, the role tends to evolve towards account interpretation, context discovery, stakeholder insight, personalized engagement, business problem detection, opportunity qualification, and consultative communication — which means that the future value of the SDR will consist in interpreting information and turning AI-enabled insights into customer engagements. As to the interrelationship of AI and human sales capabilities, the study shows that the most powerful model for enterprise sales is the collaboration of humans and AI instead of automation: the former have advantages in empathy, trust, communication, negotiation, relationship building, and contextual judgment (Paschen et al., 2020), while the latter is superior to the former in terms of speed, scale, data processing, pattern recognition, and prediction. Therefore, it looks like the future will feature a separation of roles, according to which humans will be responsible for complex interactions while AI will take care of information-intensive and repetitive tasks. Finally, as far as organisational requirements for successful AI adoption are concerned, the study concludes that having access to the technology is not sufficient to ensure successful transformation; organisations need supplementary capabilities in terms of data, technology, people, processes, and management, since poor-quality data decreases the efficiency of AI outputs, lack of training impedes adoption, and inefficient processes prevent integration of AI into sales activity (Mikalef et al., 2021, 2023).

6.3 Central Conclusion of the Study

The main conclusion from the study is that Artificial Intelligence is transforming enterprise sales development into a more intelligent and contextual sales function through augmenting human sales capabilities rather than replacing them. The importance of this transformation consists in the changed source of sales productivity: when productivity used to be enhanced through expansion of the number of prospect contacts or activities performed, with the help of AI it can now be achieved through improvement of the quality of the information used by sales professionals prior to and during customer engagements. This allows to make a paradigm shift, as far as sales development is concerned: instead of asking "how many" questions, one should start to ask "who," "why," and "what" questions — and it is the latter change which forms the core of the identified transformation.

6.4 Recommendations for Organisations

Given the findings, any organisation implementing AI in enterprise sales development must consider six related areas. It should ensure a solid data foundation because insight generated by the AI system is dependent on how good the available data is — maintaining accurate CRM records, avoiding duplicate data, keeping up-to-date account information, and creating data governance mechanisms because an AI strategy must be based on a data strategy. The organisation should automate certain repetitive tasks — data entry, lead enrichment, prospect research, follow-up reminder, meeting scheduling, creation of initial content, and reports can be automated, whereas tasks related to sensitive customer interaction, judgement, and relationship management should remain in the hands of humans. The company should deploy AI to enhance its account intelligence rather than to increase the amount of prospecting, enabling sales team members to learn about organisational priorities, industry news, possible business challenges, relevant stakeholders, and buying signals.

The company should teach AI literacy skills to its sales professionals through training focused on basics of AI, generative AI, prompts, AI-enabled research, output evaluation, data privacy, and integration of AI into CRM and sales tools — not to make sales professionals into experts of AI, but to make them AI-literate and combine technical intelligence and human judgement. It should retain human control over decision-making on lead prioritisation, customer interaction, opportunity qualification, strategic accounts, and forecasting to avoid being misled by incorrect or inappropriate output generated by the AI system. Finally, it should slowly move from activity-related metrics to outcome- and quality-related ones — qualified opportunities created, opportunity progress, quality of account interaction, conversion rates, pipeline contribution, and quality of discovery conversations, and integrate AI throughout the sales-technology ecosystem — from CRM and sales intelligence to marketing automation, communication platforms, and analytics.

6.5 Recommendations for Sales Development Representatives

The change also has implications for individual salespeople, who need to develop AI literacy and understand how AI works and how it can be applied to sales; improve their understanding of the client's industry and business model; improve their critical thinking and learn to verify if the information produced by the algorithm is accurate; develop contextual communication, because generic communication will be easier and easier to automate and differentiation of humans will happen due to their ability to engage with prospects; improve their relationship management skills including empathy, trust building, negotiating and stakeholder management, because these skills will not become less important despite the progress of technologies; and see AI as a co-pilot, as a tool for gaining intelligence and increasing productivity, but never delegate decision making process to AI without thinking. Emerging sales professional can be described in these terms as a combination of AI literacy, business understanding, sales expertise and human judgement.

6.6 Contribution, Practical Relevance and Future Scope of Research

Principal contributions of the paper are the integration of fragmented research on AI, B2B sales, sales automation, CRM, digital transformation and organisational capabilities into one paper dedicated to enterprise sales development; the narrow focus of the research on sales development function and SDR role; the recognition of the shift from volume based prospecting to AI-driven contextual selling; the focus on the human-AI complementary nature of sales development; and the suggestion of AI-Driven Contextual Selling Framework, which includes account identification, intelligence, intent, stakeholder mapping, personalisation, human engagement, qualification, value mapping and opportunity development. Its practical relevance for sales organisations consists in receiving recommendations regarding appropriate areas for AI implementation; for sales managers in redesigning of workflow, training of staff and setting up performance measures; for SDRs in understanding which competencies will be increasingly demanded; for B2B marketing and sales teams in combining customer intelligence, marketing technology, CRM and sales technology; and for business schools in teaching sales education with AI literacy and digital selling components.

As the study is based on secondary data, there are also a number of ways this topic can be researched empirically in the future. Research based on primary data collection from SDRs through interviews and surveys could explore AI application in daily sales activities, identify applications that bring the most value, and investigate the impact of AI use on job responsibility and productivity of SDRs. Organisational comparative studies could explore how AI adoption differs across different industries, organisation sizes, geography, and AI maturity. Studies based on quantitative methodology could explore relationships

between AI adoption and metrics like lead conversion, sales-cycle length, pipeline generation, and revenue generation in order to move from a descriptive to an empirical phase of the investigation. Longitudinal studies could explore evolution of the SDR position over a period of several years in order to distinguish between the temporary adaptations and restructured process of enterprise sales development. Finally, studies on the customer side could explore directly what buyers think about AI-enabled enterprise selling – do they prefer AI-assisted communication, when the level of personalisation becomes intrusive, how much automation is too much, how AI impacts trust between buyers and sellers.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

The results of the current study should be considered bearing in mind a number of methodological limitations. Due to lack of primary data collection, the study is unable to claim that the conclusions made in the study reflect the experience or perception of sales professionals, managers, and customers. The study is limited by the quality and availability of existing secondary sources and organisational disclosures regarding the use of AI-enabled technology in sales processes. As AI technologies and applications are evolving rapidly, some tools and practices described in the study may change after it is conducted. Finally, the study is descriptive in nature and thus is unable to statistically prove the existence of causal relationships between AI adoption and sales performance.

6.8 Final Conclusion

The development of enterprise sales development within the framework of Artificial Intelligence is not only about implementing new technology but about the way salespeople receive information, seek opportunities, interact with customers, and create value. As shown in the study, Artificial Intelligence may transform traditional and mechanical aspects of sales into more intellectual and data-driven practices: prospecting becomes more informed, lead qualification becomes more systematized, personalization becomes more context-based, and CRM transforms into a data environment which allows making better decisions. But the research also proves that the future of enterprise sales is not just about technology capabilities, but it still is fundamentally human: trust, empathy, communication, negotiations, decision-making, relationship building, and context awareness are important especially in complex organizational purchase decisions. Therefore, the future belongs not to AI and salespeople in opposition, but to their partnership, and the model of enterprise sales in the future can be described as follows:

AI-Driven Intelligence + Human Expertise + Customer Context = Contextual Enterprise Selling

Therefore, the SDR of the future will not be just an amplified version of the current SDR; the future SDR is likely to become an AI-empowered professional who leverages the power of technology to gain a deeper understanding of the accounts, identify opportunities, personalize the interaction, and engage with the customers. The ultimate evolution of the SDR profession can be described as transition from selling at scale, then from selling with data, then from selling with AI, and finally from selling with context. The strategic advantage of enterprise companies will be to use AI to make sales development not just faster, but smarter, more relevant, and valuable for the customer.

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