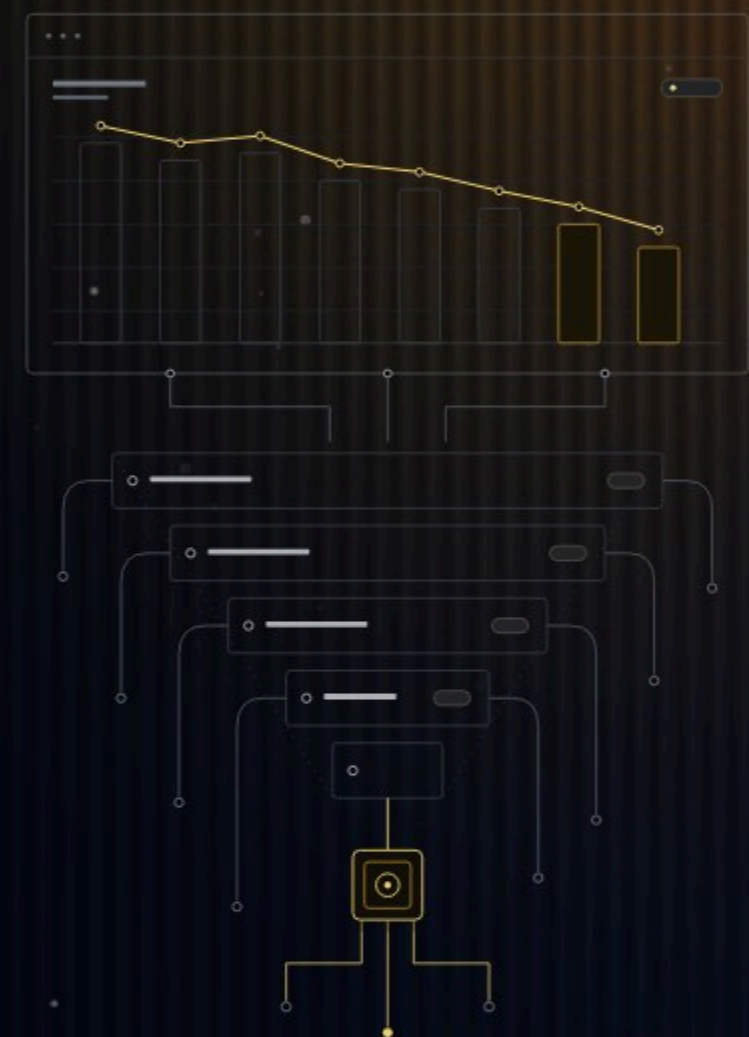

AeolusGTM research report

The State of B2B Revenue 2026

What the data says about why revenue teams are stalling, and what the companies that turn it around do differently.



Executive Summary

— 01

B2B revenue operations are in a structural crisis. Not a cyclical downturn. Not a talent shortage. A systems-level failure that many companies are trying to solve with people-level interventions.

This report pulls together published research from across the B2B landscape, plus one first-party observation from our own work, to paint a clear picture of what is happening, why the standard playbooks are failing, and what the companies that break the cycle actually do differently. Every figure is named, dated and linked to its source, and the [Sources and Methodology](#) section separates what we observed from what we cite. It is designed to be genuinely useful: something a CRO could bring to a board meeting, a VP Sales could use to build an internal case for change, or a CEO could read to understand why revenue is stalling despite a capable team.

The headline findings:

- **Fewer than half of reps hit quota.** RepVue's Cloud Sales Index put quota attainment at 42.69% in Q2 2025, based on about 47,000 ratings from quota-carrying sales professionals at 246 cloud and software companies ([RepVue, 2025](#)). Ebsta's 2025 GTM Benchmarks found 78% of sellers missed quota, up from 69% the year before ([Ebsta, April 2025](#)). We read that as a structural problem, not a performance one.
- **Sellers spend 40% of their week selling.** Salesforce's State of Sales, 7th edition, a survey of 4,050 sales professionals across 22 countries published in February 2026, puts the other 60% on non-selling work, including 13% on manual data entry ([Salesforce, 2026](#)). The 2024 edition had selling time at 30% ([Salesforce, 2024](#)).
- **Across the 150+ B2B companies we've worked inside, roughly 7 in 10 had material CRM data accuracy problems.** That is our own observation, not a survey. Independent research points the same way: 76% of CRM users say less than half their CRM data is accurate and complete ([Validity, 2025](#)), and at least 23% of an email list degrades every year ([ZeroBounce, 2026](#)). Forecasts built on this data are unreliable by design.
- **More than 80% of buying groups have fully or mostly defined their requirements by first seller contact** ([6sense, 2025](#)), and 95% of the time they buy from a vendor on their Day One shortlist ([6sense Buyer Experience Report, 2025](#)). The battle is often won or lost before sales enters the picture.
- **New business is harder to win, so existing customers matter more.** Win rates fell 18% in 2023 compared with 2022 ([Ebsta and Pavilion, 2024](#)), and sales leaders name recurring revenue (42%) and upsells and cross-sells (31%) as a top revenue source more often than one-off sales (28%) ([Salesforce, 2024](#)).
- **87% of enterprises missed their 2025 revenue targets** despite record levels of AI investment, according to Clari Labs research fielded by Censuswide among 400 revenue and IT leaders at North American enterprises with 1,000+ employees ([Clari Labs, January 2026](#)).

In our experience, the companies that turn this around rarely start by changing who is on the team. They start by looking at the entire revenue operation as one connected system and asking a different question: where is the system creating drag?

The Quota Attainment Crisis

— 02

Quota attainment is low and not recovering. [RepVue’s Cloud Sales Index for Q2 2025](#), based on about 47,000 ratings from quota-carrying sales professionals at 246 cloud and software companies, put attainment at 42.69%, slipping back below 43% from the prior quarter. [Ebsta’s 2025 GTM Benchmarks](#), published in April 2025, found 78% of sellers missed quota, up from 69% in 2024.

The concentration is extreme. [Ebsta and Pavilion’s 2024 B2B Sales Benchmarks](#), an analysis of 4.2 million opportunities across 530 companies, found just 17% of reps generate 81% of revenue. This creates significant key-person risk and masks the depth of the systemic problem. When a small group of individuals is carrying the number, leadership can mistake individual talent for organizational health.

The share of reps hitting quota also falls as deals get more complex. The figures below are RepVue data published by [The Quota in November 2023](#). They measure the percentage of reps in each role who attained quota, not average attainment.

ROLE	REPS HITTING QUOTA	CHANGE IN PAST YEAR
SDRs (Sales Development Reps)	53.2%	Up 4%
Account Managers	50.3%	Down 6%
Mid-Market AEs (Account Executives)	40.1%	Down 10%
Enterprise AEs	38.2%	Down 5%
Source: RepVue data via The Quota , November 2023 (data as of November 14, 2023). Change is RepVue’s reported movement over the prior year.		

One underreported driver: [ICONIQ Growth’s 2023 sales compensation guide](#), based on a March 2023 survey of 236 go-to-market executives at B2B SaaS companies, found 58% of companies over-assign quotas, typically by 20 to 30%, so that cumulative attainment still covers the company revenue plan. ICONIQ frames that as planning insurance. In our view, the side effect is a target a full team cannot hit by design, which tends to drive attrition, erode trust, and make attainment data hard to use for planning.

We don’t think the crisis is mainly in closing. It is in the system’s ability to generate and deliver qualified opportunities. RepVue’s Q2 2025 index recorded the lowest inbound lead flow sentiment it has ever measured.

[REPVUE CLOUD SALES INDEX, Q2 2025](#)

The Selling-Time Problem

— 03

For years, Salesforce’s State of Sales put selling time at 28 to 30% of the workweek: 28% in its 2022 edition and 30% in the 6th edition, a survey of 5,500 sales professionals across 27 countries fielded in spring 2024 ([Salesforce, 2024](#)). The [7th edition](#), a survey of 4,050 sales professionals across 22 countries published in February 2026, puts it at 40%. That still leaves 60% of the average week on work that is not selling.

ACTIVITY	SHARE OF THE WEEK	COUNTED AS
Meeting with customers	22%	Selling
Prospecting	18%	Selling
Creating quotes	17%	Not selling
Planning	16%	Not selling
Manually entering data	13%	Not selling
Training	11%	Not selling
Other	3%	Not selling
Source: Salesforce State of Sales, 7th edition (February 2026), “How Reps Spend Their Time During an Average Workweek.” Salesforce’s chart counts meeting with customers and prospecting as the 40% of selling time. The 6th edition used a different list of categories, so treat the move from 30% to 40% as directional.		

The arithmetic is simple. Moving a rep from 30% to 40% selling time is a one-third increase in selling hours with no new headcount. But the line that should be shrinking is growing: manual data entry takes 13% of the week in the 2026 edition ([Salesforce, 2026](#)), up from 9% for manually entering customer and sales information in 2024 ([Salesforce, 2024](#)). That requires changing the system, not asking people to work harder inside it.

Tool overload makes it worse. [Gartner’s survey of 1,026 B2B sellers](#), fielded January to March 2024 and published in September 2024, found 50% are overwhelmed by the amount of technology their job requires, and that overwhelmed sellers are 45% less likely to attain quota. In Salesforce’s 2026 edition, only about a third of sales teams run on a single platform; the rest use a mix of standalone tools, an average of eight per team, and 42% of reps say they are overwhelmed by too many tools ([Salesforce, 2026](#)). Each tool demands data entry, each integration has gaps, and the cognitive load compounds across the stack.

Clean Dashboard, Dirty Reality

— 04

Across the 150+ B2B companies we’ve worked inside, roughly 7 in 10 had material CRM data accuracy problems. That is our own first-party observation, not a survey; the [methodology](#) below explains what it rests on and where it is likely biased. Independent research points the same way.

[Validity’s State of CRM Data Management in 2025](#), a survey of 602 CRM users and admins across the US, UK and Australia, found 76% say less than half their CRM data is accurate and complete, and that workers spend 13 hours a week hunting for basic information in the CRM. The data does not hold still either: [ZeroBounce’s 2026 Email List Decay Report](#), based on more than 11 billion verified emails, found at least 23% of an email list degrades annually.

But the deeper problem is not the data decay itself. It is what happens when sales cultures incentivize reps to make the data look right rather than *be* right. Dashboards display a healthy pipeline. Then the forecast misses: [Xactly’s 2024 Sales Forecasting Benchmark Report](#) found only 20% of sales organizations forecast within 5% of actuals, and 43% miss by 10% or more.

The slippage is measurable. [Ebsta and Pavilion’s 2024 benchmarks](#) found 44% of deals slipped in 2023, up from 37% in 2022 ([Ebsta, 2023](#)), and that deals whose close dates moved more than three times saw win rates fall 77%. [Salesloft’s 2026 U.S. Revenue Benchmark Report](#), fielded by Censuswide among 500 U.S. sales and revenue decision-makers and published in September 2026, estimates 19.7% of pipeline is affected by stalled deals, slipped close dates and other execution breakdowns, and found only about 32% of leaders can instantly diagnose why a deal has stalled. The gap between what the data says and what is actually happening widens until the two have almost nothing to do with each other.

CRM Field	Forecast Risk (Our View)	What Happens
Close Date	Highest	Reps tend to push dates forward optimistically and are slow to mark deals lost. A one-week slip can cascade into a quarter miss.
Deal Amount	High	Pricing concessions can go unrecorded, inflating pipeline value. The forecast shows revenue that will never materialize.
Stage Progression	High	Batch updates create the appearance of movement. Stale stages mask dead deals. Our rule of thumb, not a benchmark: 14+ days without an update is a flag.
Risk ratings are AeolusGTM’s view from working inside these systems, not survey data.		

The downstream damage extends well beyond sales. Marketing teams can spend weeks building account-based campaigns on outdated CRM data, then have to scrap the work before launch. AI raises the stakes: 46% of sales professionals using AI agents say data quality issues hurt their sales ([Salesforce, 2026](#)). AI models trained on dirty CRM data accelerate flawed processes, amplify noise, and erode organizational trust in technology.

The Buyer Has Already Decided

— 05

The B2B buyer has fundamentally changed how they purchase. A [Gartner survey of 646 B2B buyers](#), conducted August to September 2025 and published in March 2026, found 67% prefer a rep-free experience. [6sense’s 2024 Buyer Experience Report](#) found buyers were nearly 70% of the way through their purchasing process before engaging sellers; the [2025 edition](#) puts first contact at about 61% of the journey. Earlier, but still well after the shortlist forms. By the time your rep gets a call, the buyer has often already narrowed the field.

The numbers tell a clear story:

- **More than 80% of buying groups** have fully or mostly defined their requirements by first seller contact ([6sense, 2025](#)).
- Buyers evaluate an average of **five vendors** and fill about **four shortlist spots on Day One** ([6sense, 2025](#)).
- **95% of the time**, buyers choose a vendor from that Day One shortlist, up from 85% the year before ([6sense, 2025](#)).
- **81% of buyers** already had a preferred vendor at the time of first contact ([6sense, 2024](#)).
- **94% of buyers** use large language models in their buying process ([6sense, 2025](#)).

The 95:5 Rule

Professor John Dawes of the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute put it this way in 2021: “up to 95% of business clients are not in the market for many goods and services at any one time” ([Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, 2021](#)). Only a small share, around 5%, is actively buying. The rest are out-of-market and not researching. Traditional high-volume outbound is structurally designed to fight over that small pool of active buyers while ignoring the 95% who represent future revenue.

The implication is significant. In our view, companies that put most of their GTM budget into demand capture (reaching the roughly 5% who are active now) are underinvesting in demand creation: building the brand gravity, thought leadership, and educational presence that puts them on the Day One shortlist when the other 95% eventually enter a buying cycle.

Metric	Data Point	Implication
Average buying group size	10+ people 6sense, 2025	Consensus stall risk is high
Outside parties engaged	76% of buyers engaged at least one, such as analysts or consultants 6sense, 2025	Your claims get checked by people you may never meet
VP-level or above involved	52% of buying-group decision-makers TrustRadius, 2024	Strategic alignment mandatory
Average buying cycle	10.1 months, down from 11.3 in 2024 6sense, 2025	Shorter, but still most of a year
Win rates	Down 18% in 2023 vs. 2022, and 27% vs. 2021 Ebsta and Pavilion, 2024	Each lost shortlist spot costs more

The Retention Recession

— 06

New business is getting harder to win and smaller when you do. [Ebsta and Pavilion’s 2024 benchmarks](#) found win rates fell 18% in 2023 compared with 2022, and average deal values fell 21%. [Clari Labs research](#), fielded by Censuswide among 400 revenue and IT leaders at North American enterprises with 1,000+ employees and published in January 2026, found 87% of enterprises missed their 2025 revenue targets despite record levels of AI investment.

That puts more weight on the customers you already have. In Salesforce’s State of Sales, 6th edition, sales leaders named recurring revenue and upsells and cross-sells as a top revenue source more often than one-off sales, and Salesforce’s own read of its data is that most businesses see greater revenue by selling to existing customers than to new ones ([Salesforce, 2024](#)).

REVENUE SOURCE	SALES LEADERS NAMING IT A TOP SOURCE
Recurring sales	42%
Upsells and cross-sells	31%
One-off sales	28%
Source: Salesforce State of Sales, 6th edition (2024), base: sales leaders. Shares add to more than 100%.	

The Perception Gap

Bain & Company’s 2005 brief [Closing the Delivery Gap](#) surveyed 362 firms and found 80% believed they delivered a “superior experience” to their customers. When Bain then asked customers about their own perceptions, it heard “a very different story.” The measurement is two decades old and we have not seen it repeated, but we suspect the gap is still there. Churn is rarely a single event. It is the culmination of a widening gap between what the vendor believes they are delivering and what the customer actually experiences.

The Implementation Mismatch

Buyers buy outcomes. Vendors often treat implementation as a cost to minimize once the contract is signed. In our view, this mismatch explains a lot of avoidable churn: customers who do not see value early are hard to keep. And some churn is not a decision at all. It is a failed payment nobody followed up on, which is exactly the revenue a well-run billing and dunning process recovers.

The Talent Crisis

— 07

The turnover data is more mixed than the folklore, and the mix is telling. Salesforce’s State of Sales, 6th edition, found sales teams reported 18% average staff turnover over the prior 12 months, down from 25% in 2022, yet 64% of sales professionals said they would leave if offered a similar job elsewhere with better pay ([Salesforce, 2024](#)). [Ebsta and Pavilion’s 2024 benchmarks](#) found turnover among reps not making quota rose from 22% to 36%.

Sales development has its own churn math. [The Bridge Group’s 2025 SDR research](#), a survey of 351 B2B companies published in February 2025, puts median annual SDR attrition at 40% in 2024: 13% involuntary, 11% voluntary and 16% promotions. Average SDR tenure has recovered to 1.9 years, the highest since the early 2010s, but the share of SDRs at quota fell to 60%, the lowest in the study’s history.

The replacement cost is significant even when ramp is fast. The Bridge Group puts average SDR ramp time at 3.0 months, the lowest since 2010, and that is before recruitment fees, management distraction, and lost institutional knowledge. Organizations caught in this cycle tend to experience perpetual resets in pipeline generation, making revenue volatile and forecasting unreliable.

The Burnout Architecture

Overload is measurable. [Gartner’s 2024 survey of 1,026 B2B sellers](#) found 72% feel overwhelmed by the number of skills their job requires and 50% by the amount of technology it requires. Gartner’s analyst warned that without support, sales leaders risk “undermining productivity and potentially leading to burnout and disengagement.”

In our view, the structural driver is a cycle: hitting target often leads to a bigger target the following year. The reward for excellent performance is a harder number, which drives the behaviors (longer hours, emotional exhaustion, unsustainable pace) that lead to burnout and departure. The system punishes its best performers for performing.

Modern enterprise selling compounds this. With buying groups averaging 10 or more people ([6sense, 2025](#)), reps have to build and hold relationships with many stakeholders at once, while staying positive through constant rejection.

When the median company turns over 40% of its SDR seats in a year, counting promotions, no amount of hiring will stabilize the pipeline. That is not a people problem. It is a system problem.

[THE BRIDGE GROUP, 2025 SDR RESEARCH](#)

What AI Actually Changes

— 08

AI is now standard kit. Salesforce's State of Sales, 7th edition, found 87% of sales organizations use some form of AI ([Salesforce, 2026](#)); in the 2024 edition, 81% of sales teams said they used AI. In that 2024 edition, 83% of sales teams with AI saw revenue growth in the past year, against 66% of teams without AI ([Salesforce, 2024](#)), a correlation rather than proof that AI caused the growth. [Gartner's 2024 survey of 1,026 B2B sellers](#) found sellers who effectively partner with AI tools are 3.7 times more likely to meet quota than those who do not.

But the most important thing AI changes is not what most people think. The core value is not better emails or smarter chatbots. It is automating the 60% of the week that still goes to non-selling work. AI agents that auto-summarize call transcripts, update CRM fields, track usage telemetry, and draft follow-ups do not replace salespeople. They give salespeople their time back.

Where AI Creates Real Impact

- High performers are **1.7x more likely** than underperformers to use prospecting agents ([Salesforce, 2026](#)).
- Salesforce's own example, from the report's foreword: agents working its untouched leads contacted 130,000 leads and created **3,200 opportunities in four months**. It is a vendor describing its own deployment, so read it as an illustration, not a benchmark ([Salesforce, 2026](#)).
- **88% of sales professionals with agents** say AI and agents increase their odds of hitting sales targets ([Salesforce, 2026](#)).
- **34% of sales teams with agents** use them for coaching, such as roleplaying sales calls and giving personalized tips, rising to 36% among high performers ([Salesforce, 2026](#)).

The Risk: Dirty Data In, Accelerated Failure Out

AI models trained on dirty CRM data do not improve processes. They accelerate flawed ones. Propensity-to-buy scoring built on inaccurate underlying data misdirects teams, drops conversion quality, and erodes trust in the technology itself. The same Salesforce survey found 79% of high-performing sales organizations prioritize data hygiene, against 54% of underperformers ([Salesforce, 2026](#)). That is a correlation, not proof, but in our experience the teams getting AI right tend to be the ones that solved their data foundation first. AI is infrastructure, not a feature. Deploying it on a broken foundation compounds the problems rather than solving them.

For a field-level test of whether your own CRM history is ready for AI forecasting, see [The 2026 AI Readiness Audit](#).

The Companies That Turn It Around

— 09

The data points throughout this report can feel overwhelming. But in our experience, the companies that break the cycle tend to share a few characteristics, and their approach is more about subtraction and realignment than adding more to an already overloaded system.

1. They treat the revenue operation as one connected system

Revenue data that disagrees with itself is a symptom of silos. Clari Labs’ January 2026 research, fielded by Censuswide among 400 revenue and IT leaders at North American enterprises, found 55% report conflicting pipeline signals from disconnected data sources, and 42% still lack formal governance frameworks to ensure data consistency and accountability ([Clari Labs, 2026](#)). A formal Revenue Operations (RevOps) model aligns sales, marketing, and customer success under shared definitions, goals, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In our view, that is how those signals start to agree.

2. They recalibrate quotas through a market reality lens

Instead of arbitrary over-assignment, they set targets based on actual market conditions, pipeline reality, and historical conversion data. This restores trust between leadership and the sales floor, makes forecasting meaningful, and stops the attrition cycle that quota inflation creates.

3. They consolidate rather than accumulate

In Salesforce’s 2026 edition, over four in five teams without a single platform plan to consolidate their tools, and high performers are 1.3x more likely to move to a platform ([Salesforce, 2026](#)). The goal is reducing cognitive load, enabling clean data flow, and giving sellers their time back. Every tool that does not directly help a rep close a deal is a tax on their capacity.

4. They shift budget from demand capture to demand creation

Recognizing that more than 80% of buying groups define their requirements before first seller contact ([6sense, 2025](#)), they reallocate resources from fighting over the roughly 5% of active buyers toward building the brand gravity, thought leadership, and educational presence that earns a spot on the Day One shortlist for the other 95%.

5. They solve the data foundation before deploying AI

Rather than layering AI on top of broken data, they invest in CRM hygiene as a board-level priority. Automated data capture, strict governance, and AI-driven enrichment ensure the foundation is sound before scaling autonomous agents across the revenue operation.

6. They invest in retention with the same intensity as acquisition

With new business harder to win, retention is one of the highest-return investments available. They redesign onboarding for early value delivery, implement smart dunning to recover involuntary churn, and build customer success into the revenue architecture rather than treating it as a separate cost center.

2026 Benchmarks

— 10

Reference points for B2B revenue operations. Every published figure below comes from the research cited in this report, with its source and date. Where a table shows a target, it is AeolusGTM’s recommendation, our opinion rather than data. Use these as diagnostic starting points, not absolute targets. Every company’s context is different.

Revenue Execution Benchmarks

Metric	Latest Published Figure
Reps hitting quota	42.69% in Q2 2025 RepVue Cloud Sales Index
Sellers missing quota	78% in 2025, up from 69% in 2024 Ebsta 2025 GTM Benchmarks
Enterprises missing revenue targets	87% for 2025 Clari Labs and Censuswide, January 2026
Deals slipping	44% in 2023, up from 37% in 2022 Ebsta and Pavilion, 2024 ; Ebsta, 2023
Pipeline hit by stalls and slips	An estimated 19.7% Salesloft and Censuswide, September 2026
Forecasts within 5% of actuals	20% of sales organizations Xactly, 2024

Sales Productivity Benchmarks

Metric	Latest Published Figure	AeolusGTM Target
Time spent selling	40% of the week in 2026, 30% in 2024 Salesforce, 2026 ; Salesforce, 2024	Ahead of the 40% average
Manual data entry	13% of the week in 2026, 9% in 2024 Salesforce, 2026 ; Salesforce, 2024	As close to zero as automation allows
Standalone tools	8 per team, for teams not on a single platform Salesforce, 2026	5 to 7, integrated
SDR annual attrition	40% median in 2024, including 16 points of promotions The Bridge Group, 2025	Below 20%, excluding promotions
CRM data accuracy	76% of users say under half their CRM data is accurate and complete Validity, 2025 Roughly 7 in 10 of the companies we’ve worked inside had material problems AeolusGTM first-party observation	95%+ of records accurate
SDR ramp time	3.0 months on average The Bridge Group, 2025	Under 3 months
Targets are AeolusGTM’s recommendations, not published data.		

Buyer Behavior Benchmarks

Metric	Data Point	Implication
Rep-free preference	67% of B2B buyers Gartner, March 2026	Self-serve and content-led motions are table stakes
Journey complete at first seller contact	About 61% in 2025, about 69% in 2024 6sense, 2025	Sales role shifts from teaching to validating
Requirements defined before first contact	More than 80% of buying groups 6sense, 2025	Late-stage differentiation is hard
Day One shortlist conversion	95% of purchases 6sense, 2025	You must be known before the cycle starts
Average buying group	10+ people 6sense, 2025	Multi-threading is mandatory
LLM use in buying	94% of buyers 6sense, 2025	Showing up in AI answers is now a channel

About This Report

This report was compiled by AeolusGTM, a hands-on Go-to-Market (GTM) and revenue operations consultancy. We embed directly inside companies to find what is limiting revenue growth and build what is needed to move past it. We are operators, not advisors.

It combines published third-party research with one first-party observation from our own work across 150+ B2B companies. It was first published in March 2026 and revised in October 2026, when we re-checked every figure against its primary source, replaced statistics we could not trace, and added the methodology below. It is intended as a diagnostic resource, not a sales document. We believe that sharing useful knowledge freely is how trust gets built.

Cite this report: AeolusGTM, *The State of B2B Revenue 2026*, March 2026, revised October 2026, <https://aeolusgtm.com/reports/state-of-b2b-revenue-2026/>.

Sources and Methodology

What we observed

One finding in this report is ours. Across the 150+ B2B companies we’ve worked inside, first building and running a sales agency and now as AeolusGTM, roughly 7 in 10 had material CRM data accuracy problems: issues serious enough to affect the forecast. This is an operator’s assessment formed while working inside those systems, not a survey or an instrument reading, which is why we state it as “roughly 7 in 10” rather than a precise figure.

The sample is not random. Companies that bring in a revenue operator usually already suspect a problem, so the rate across all B2B companies is likely lower than what we saw. Validity’s independent 2025 survey, which found 76% of CRM users say less than half their CRM data is accurate and complete, reaches a similar conclusion by a different method.

What we cite

Every other number in this report comes from published third-party research, named inline with its date and linked to the original. Where two sources measure different things or different years, we say so rather than blend them. Targets in the benchmark tables are our recommendations, not data, and rules of thumb, like our 14-day stale-stage flag, are labelled as ours.

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