

# The 2025 Sales Demo Report

What over 350 sellers revealed about the high-stakes world of sales demos



# Table of Contents

**The 5 Biggest Takeaways..... 3**

**The 2025 Sales Demo Effectiveness Report..... 4**

**Bad Demos Lose Deals.....5**

**Most Products Are Hard to Demo .....6**

**SEs Do Great Demos, But AEs Run More of Them .....7**

**Only 1 in 4 Sales Teams Give a Demo on the First Call.....8**

**Personalization Is Painful .....9**

**Final Thoughts ..... 10**

# The 5 Biggest Takeaways

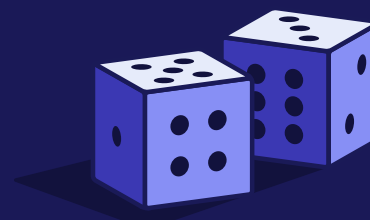
## 81% have lost a deal due to a bad demo

Buyers consistently choose the vendor that delivers the best demo. One misstep can lose the deal.



## Nearly half of sellers avoid showing certain features

46% say some of their features are too complex or fragile to demo live so they skip them entirely.



## Solutions Engineers (SEs) are overused early in the sales cycle

SEs deliver first demos almost 50% of the time. We recommend Account Executives be empowered to run their own demos.



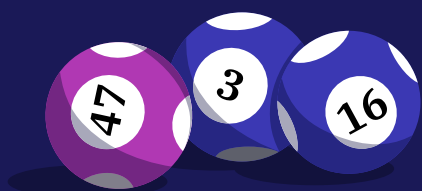
## Only 1 in 4 sales teams demo on the first call

Buyers want to see the product upfront, but most sales orgs wait until the second (or even third!) meeting.



## Personalized demos work — but they're a pain

85% of sellers personalize their demos despite admitting the process is manual and slow.



The full findings below dig into these themes. You'll get a data-backed look at how sellers are running their demos, why they sometimes go wrong, and what you can do about it.

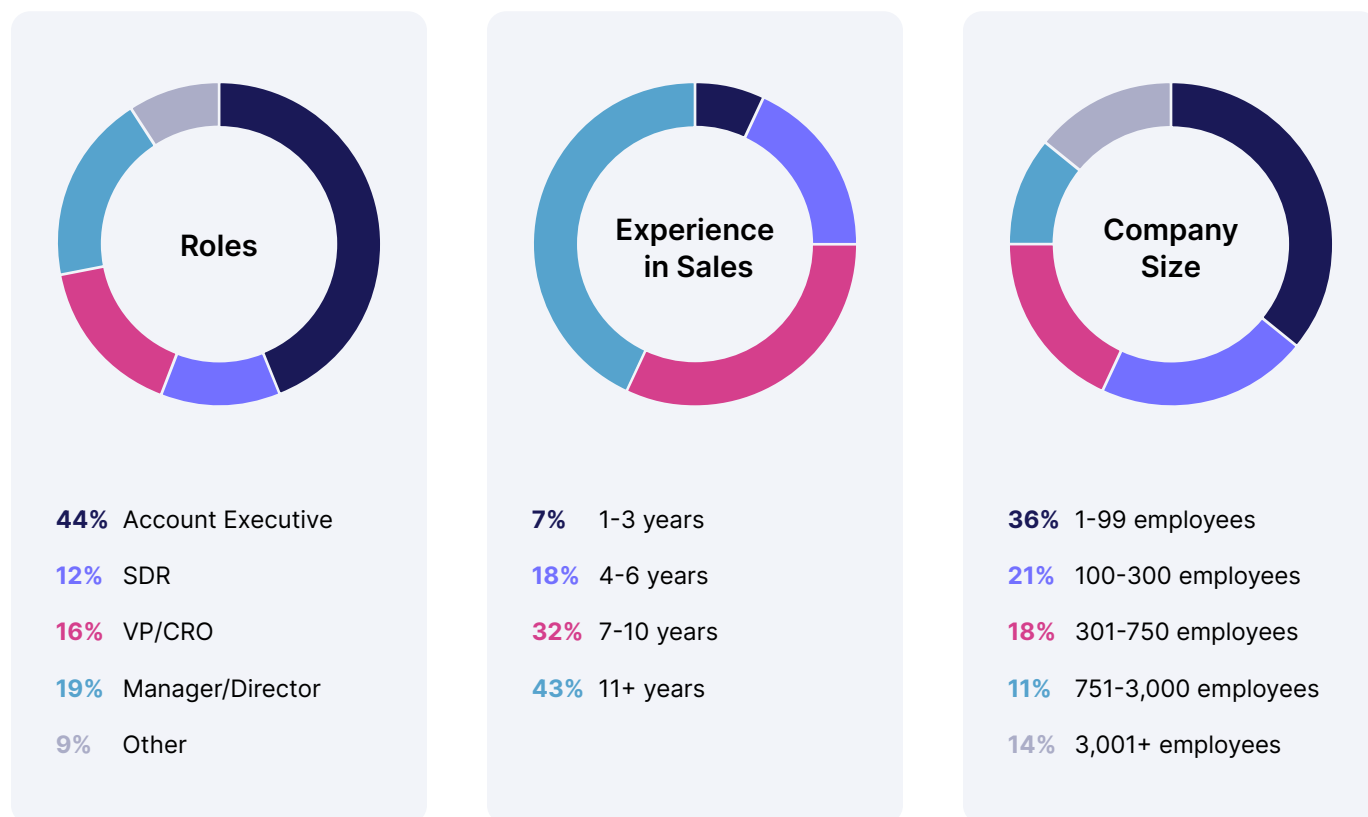
# The 2025 Sales Demo Effectiveness Report

## Executive Summary

Demos are high-stakes. It's where the best sellers shine, but also where the most can go wrong. Buyers are scrutinizing the product. A single buggy feature, a conspicuously empty screen, or embarrassing dummy data can sink an otherwise promising deal.

We surveyed 350+ sales professionals to understand what's really happening inside sales demos today. We wanted to know what's working, what's painful, and how demos are impacting deals.

## Who Took the Survey



The respondents were a seasoned group of sellers. The vast majority had at least 7 years in Sales. That's important context, because these responses reflect hands-on experience. The majority were individual contributors (AEs or SDRs) which makes sense because they're the ones typically on the front lines doing demos, pitches, and discovery.

The company size was more varied, with respondents that skewed SMB and Mid-Market, with a healthy number of enterprises as well.

# Bad Demos Lose Deals

Most sales teams know demos matter, but they may not realize just how much weight they carry. Demos are the make-or-break moment. A demo gone sideways isn't just awkward. It's expensive. And it's happening more often than most teams realize.

# 81%

of sellers say they've lost a deal because of a bad demo.



## What That Tells Us

We talk a lot about sales methodology and deal strategy, but this stat makes it clear: the demo is the deal. And when it goes wrong, there might not be a second chance.

On the flip side, a similar study from Bain & Co. found that 72% of buyers say the vendor they chose was the one who gave the best demo.

In other words, a bad demo can sink a deal, but a great demo can put you in the best position to win it.

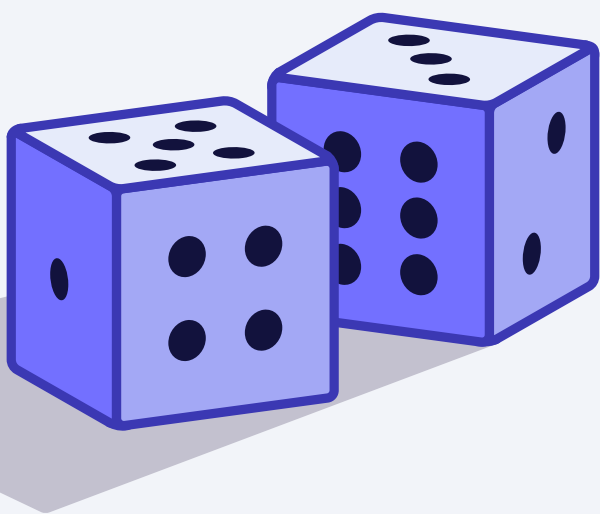
Most reps feel confident that their demos are working. After all, 92% say they think their demos are “positively impacting conversion”. But clearly, something’s getting lost between intent and execution.

## Recommendations

- Have a gold standard demo environment (with a polished demo flow and talk track) that’s reliable, repeatable, and scalable.
- Implement a post-mortem process for closed-lost deals. Was the demo a factor? And if so, how?
- Invest in demo certification and coaching. Take advantage of AI in call recording software when possible.

# Most Products Are Hard to Demo

Demos aren't just about showing the product. They're about making it look easy, intuitive, and valuable. That's easier said than done. More often than not, it's not the seller at fault — it's a rigid product and demo environment.



# 46%

of sellers avoid certain features because they're too hard to demo live.

## What That Tells Us

Modern software products are complex, which makes them really hard to demo. Sellers often have the unenviable task of showing a technical product to a non-technical, business audience. It's hard enough to translate what the product does and how it works. But in a demo, sellers actually have to show it, too!

That's why 92% of sellers say their product is at least "somewhat hard" to demo and "losing engagement" is their #1 fear.

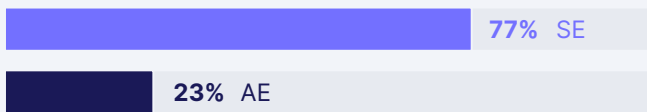
It doesn't help matters that those same products can be unreliable when shown live. From slow-loading visualizations to finicky APIs and AI, reps often steer clear of the riskiest parts of the product. All the while, sellers have to balance their biggest fear: losing the room.

This reinforces a hard truth: even great products can be hard to demonstrate.

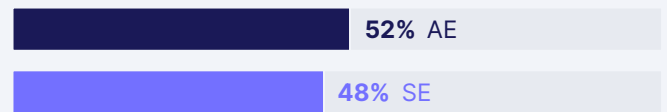
# SEs Do Great Demos, But AEs Run More of Them

SEs are the technical experts on a deal, and with that technical expertise comes excellent demo skills. Unfortunately, that means SEs are getting pulled into demos that AEs should be able to run on their own.

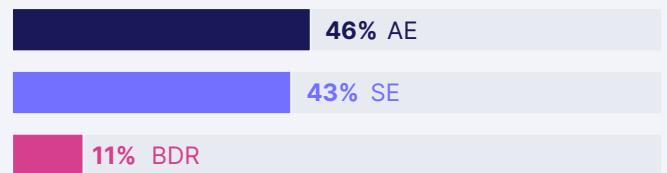
## Who gives better demos?



## Who actually runs the first demo?



## Who should run it?



## What That Tells Us

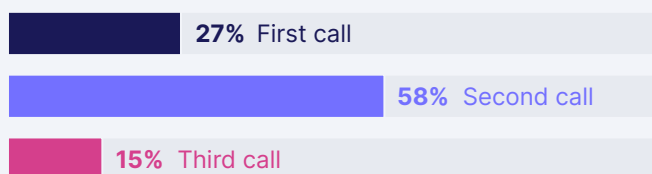
This isn't a call for SEs to run more demos. It's a call for AEs to get better at them. SEs are great at demoing, but they're among the most time-strapped people at your company. If they're getting pulled into early-stage calls they don't need to be on, that's less time for them to spend on their core, revenue-generating activities like designing solutions and running POCs.

The ideal state? AEs lead tight, relevant early demos. SEs get looped in when it counts. But for that to work, AEs need better training, better demo environments, and better discovery.

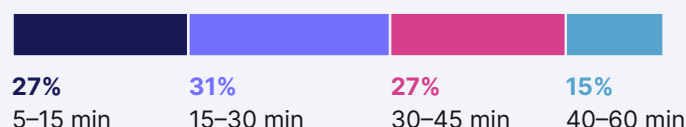
# Only 1 in 4 Sales Teams Give a Demo on the First Call

“When” and “how” to give a demo are among the most urgent questions for sales teams. Most sellers are nervous to give a demo on the first call (they’d rather spend the time gathering context and saving the demo for later). Sellers are united in the “live walkthrough” as the ideal demo format, but significantly more split on the ideal demo length.

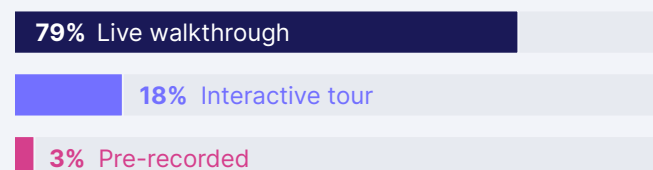
## When do you give the first demo?



## Ideal demo length



## Preferred format



## What That Tells Us

Sellers are clear on how the demo should be delivered: not pre-recorded, not a slide deck, not a click-through demo. It has to be a live walkthrough in a realistic environment.

This points to a shift in demo strategy: away from monologues and screenshots and toward back-and-forth conversations over a live demo.

The data points to another shift in the making: sales teams think demoing early is a risk, but that’s at odds with what modern software buyers want.

They expect to see the product upfront. The best sellers are able to handle discovery and demo simultaneously. In fact, using the product as a backdrop for discovery can be incredibly effective.

Finally, the split on the ideal demo length is most likely due to variations in product complexity and sales process. Have a simple product, and just want to get buy-in for a trial? A quick walkthrough should suffice! Have a technical buyer with a laundry list of questions? A lengthy deep dive is more appropriate.



# Personalization Is Painful

Everyone agrees personalized demos perform better. The problem? Personalization takes time. A lot of it. We asked respondents how often they personalize, what holds them back, and what they look for in a great demo environment.

# 85%

say they personalize demo data for each prospect.

Of those who don't,

# 57%

say it's too time-consuming.

## Top traits of a great demo environment

|    |                    |                     |
|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| #1 | Most Important     | Story-driven data   |
| #2 | Very Important     | Realism             |
| #3 | Important          | Reliability         |
| #4 | Somewhat Important | Personalization     |
| #5 | Least Important    | Up-to-date features |

## What makes a demo successful?

|    |                    |                  |
|----|--------------------|------------------|
| #1 | Most Important     | Storytelling     |
| #2 | Very Important     | Robust discovery |
| #3 | Important          | Personalization  |
| #4 | Somewhat Important | Engagement       |
| #5 | Least Important    | Technical depth  |

## What That Tells Us

Sellers want to personalize, but it's not scalable. And if we zoom out, we see a consistent theme: what sellers really value isn't deep technical depth. It's story, relevance, and flow.

The best demo environments make it easy to show what matters, with data that tells a story and a flow that's repeatable and easy to follow. Unfortunately, building demo environments and flows like that is easier said than done.

New demo technologies are using AI to make this easier. AI is great at generating data, and modern demo tools are able to inject that data into a demo. That makes it easier to create custom demo environments without needing to pull in engineering or other resources.

# Final Thoughts

Demos aren't just a stage in the sales process. They're the moment of truth. And for most teams, this is where they're losing too many deals.

The good news? The solutions are clear: better enablement for AEs, clearer role boundaries for SEs, more reliable demo environments, and more scalable personalization. Teams that solve these challenges aren't just saving SE time and increasing conversion rates. They're building a scalable, high-performing revenue engine.

Looking for more ways to embed interactive demos across your sales process?

[Download](#) **The Demo Advantage: How to Sell Smarter at Every Stage of the Funnel** for specific techniques, real examples, and actionable steps you can implement immediately to accelerate your sales with demos.

