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SBI Go-to-Market Imperatives for 2022



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022 promises continued disruption for CEOs and their teams: the continuation of the Great Resignation (our latest data shows no sign of a slow-down), an exploding commercial technology landscape, inflation, supply chain disruptions, and of course, Board and investor pressure to accelerate growth.

This SBI report provides a detailed look at [six go-to-market imperatives](#) that will position growth leaders for success and resilience in the year ahead, spanning talent engagement and retention, the use of commercial tech to improve sales productivity, and Marketing's post-pandemic evolution.

INTRODUCTION

It's no secret that 2021 was a break-out year for investors. Both US and global markets experienced strong growth, with deal volume and valuations that rose through the year, and publicly held companies consistently beating analyst expectations.

All of that activity has translated into rising growth expectations for CEOs and their commercial leadership teams – a theme that has set the tone for 2022, pushing commercial leaders to deliver higher growth in less time.

As growth leaders begin executing their strategic plans, we've identified six strategic imperatives for CEOs and their teams to embrace as they pursue big 2022 goals.

Martha Mathers, *SBI Head of Research*

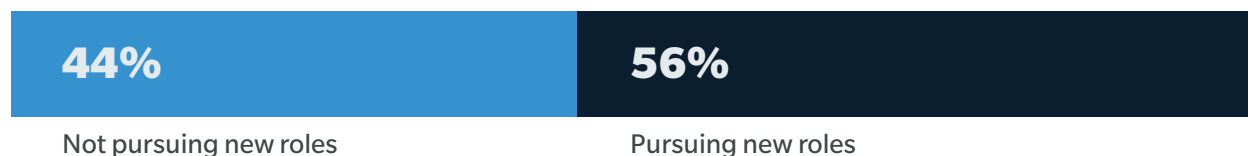
DON'T ASSUME THE GREAT RESIGNATION IS OVER

Many CEOs and commercial leaders are already talking about the Great Resignation in the past tense, citing strong employee engagement and Gallup survey numbers. SBI data shows this couldn't be further from the truth. In Q4 of last year, SBI research suggested that 51% of seller capacity is at risk for most organizations between open headcount, attrition and associated backfills, and growth hires who need to ramp.

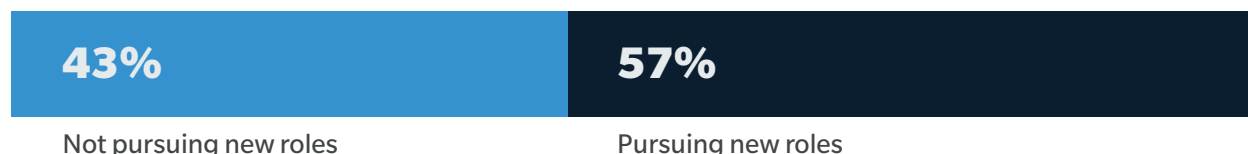
In reality, 51% may downplay the severity of the talent challenge in 2022. While many CEOs and commercial leaders are quick to point to healthy employee engagement and job satisfaction reports, that data is misleading. New, joint research from SBI and the Top Percentile Collective shows that a full 56% of in-seat sellers are actively job searching, with 57% of A-Players doing so. Furthermore, SBI data finds a startling 44% of satisfied A-Players - i.e., those who exceeded their 2021 on-target earnings - are also shopping for their next opportunity.

DON'T GET FOOLED BY SATISFACTION

Percent of All Surveyed Sellers Looking for a New Role



Percent of Surveyed High Performers Looking for a New Role



Source: SBI and The Top Percentile Collective Joint Research; n=121 companies and 650+ quota-carrying reps.
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Implication: Build for resilience and win with the talent you have

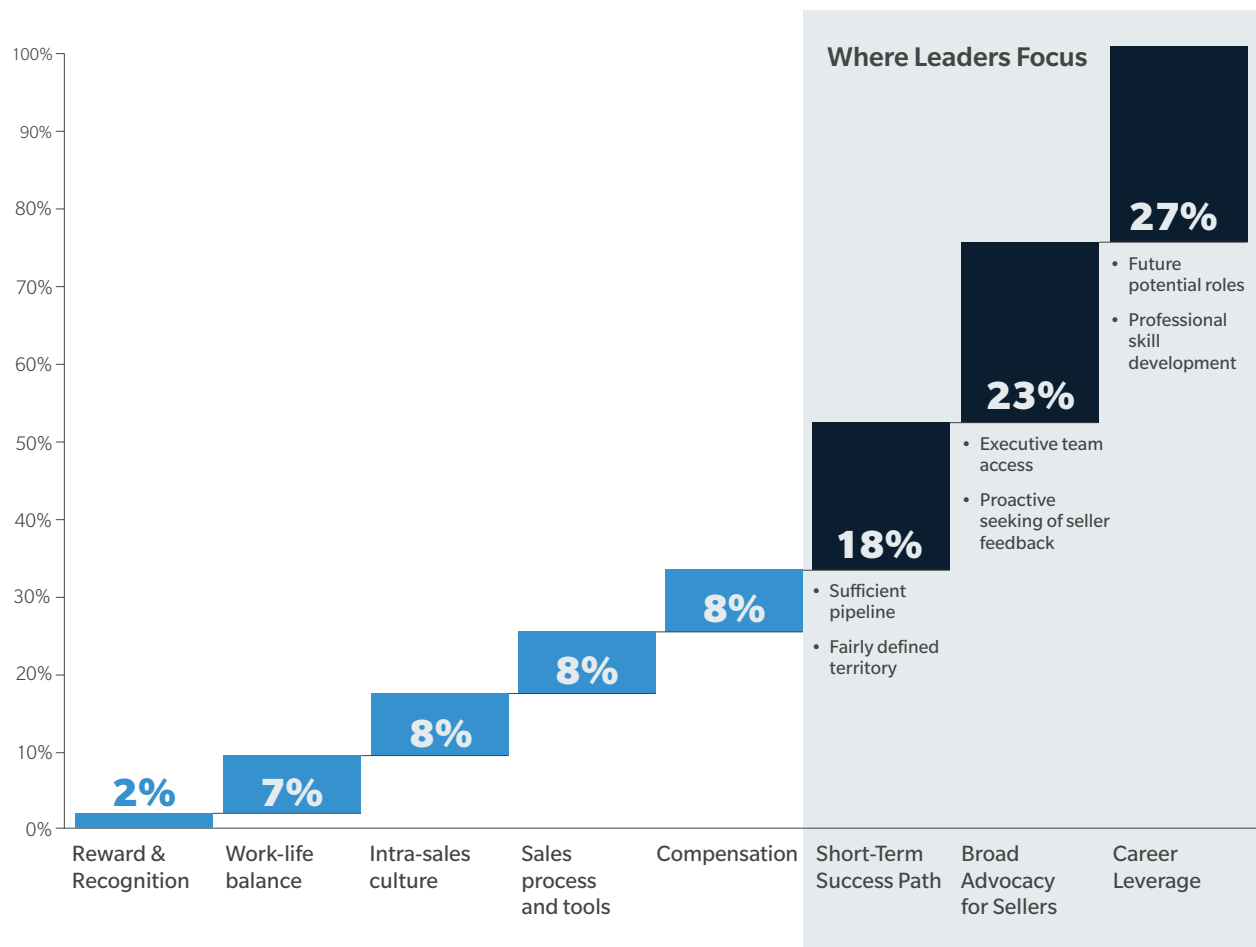
How do you navigate an environment where it seems like every seller is shopping around? There's a clear hallmark we see when looking at those organizations with lower attrition and fewer sellers pursuing new opportunities. They prioritize building their sales force over buying it. Specifically, these teams place strategic importance on the enablement function instead of relegating it to onboarding alone. In these companies, Sales Enablement resembles a product organization, developing and actively managing new products and services to support accelerated development and skill acquisition for distinct audiences, including new-to-company and tenured sellers, frontline managers, and entry-level roles.

STOP COMP'ING YOUR WAY TO GROWTH

Many CEOs and commercial leaders are boosting on-target earnings (OTE) to retain their sales teams; our latest data shows 2022 increases between 5-10% for existing teams. While sellers are glad to take the pay bump, a recent SBI analysis assessed more than 100 aspects of the seller experience, and then used factor analysis to test the impact of eight key areas on sellers' intent to stay with their organization. We found that compensation has less than half the impact of the top three drivers of sellers' intent to stay with their existing organization. Specifically, these top three factors include: 1) ability for sellers to see the potential for future career growth, 2) executives' advocacy for sellers, and 3) short-term success path (e.g., sufficient pipeline and a fairly defined territory).

COMPENSATION ISN'T THE PATH TO VICTORY

Factor Impact on Discouraging Seller Pursuit of New Job Opportunities



Source: SBI and The Top Percentile Collective Joint Research; n=121 companies and 650+ quota-carrying reps.
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Implication: Give sellers a voice in how the company grows; show commitment to helping them reach their full potential

More than anything, sellers prioritize their potential to evolve as professionals in an organization where leaders value their input and feedback. To improve intent to stay, executives must boost seller confidence in their near- and long-term prospects.

- **Career Growth Potential (Long-Term):** Executive teams must ensure clear pathways to move into new roles exist, with examples of sellers who have embraced these moves. Interestingly, near-term promotions were not as impactful on seller intent-to-stay as professional skill development and the perception of compelling future roles.
- **Broad Executive Advocacy for Sellers (Long-Term):** Sellers must feel the support of the entire C-suite. While the sales climate did not influence intent-to-stay significantly, company climate did. Specifically, sellers value access and the ability to dialogue with senior leadership. If executives beyond the CRO do not connect with sellers regularly to seek their input on the company's direction, your organization has work to do.
- **Short-Term Success Path (Short-Term):** Our analysis showed the importance of sellers perceiving they have the raw material to succeed. With most surveyed sellers generating the bulk of their own pipeline, Marketing may represent the most significant improvement opportunity for CROs. Only 15% of sellers agreed that the function generates good-quality pipeline, signaling that CROs cannot afford to deprioritize the problem. For underperforming teams, Marketing may require clearer, or more aggressive mid- and lower-funnel contribution targets; they may also need improved qualification and lead development protocols at the top of the funnel. For organizations that identify the need for improved interlock, consider building unified teams, or at a minimum, creating shared goals.

DIGITAL SELLING SHIFTS FROM SELLER PRODUCTIVITY TO CUSTOMER ENABLEMENT

Most organizations have finally advanced their digital selling approach beyond “running the standard sales playbook in Zoom”. However, while innovations in commercial technology have rapidly advanced seller productivity under the auspices of “digital selling,” few organizations have meaningfully examined what digital selling means to the customer.

SBI defines digital selling as the process for leveraging multiple channels to find, engage, and connect with prospective buyers and has found that high-growth companies are betting much more heavily on digital selling than their peers (*see chart on page 7*). The hallmarks of a mature digital selling capability include greater balance between seller productivity tools and customer experience capabilities, incorporating tools such as digital sales rooms, demo automation technology, co-pilot tools, and AI-guided selling, which uses machine learning to predict likely buyer questions.

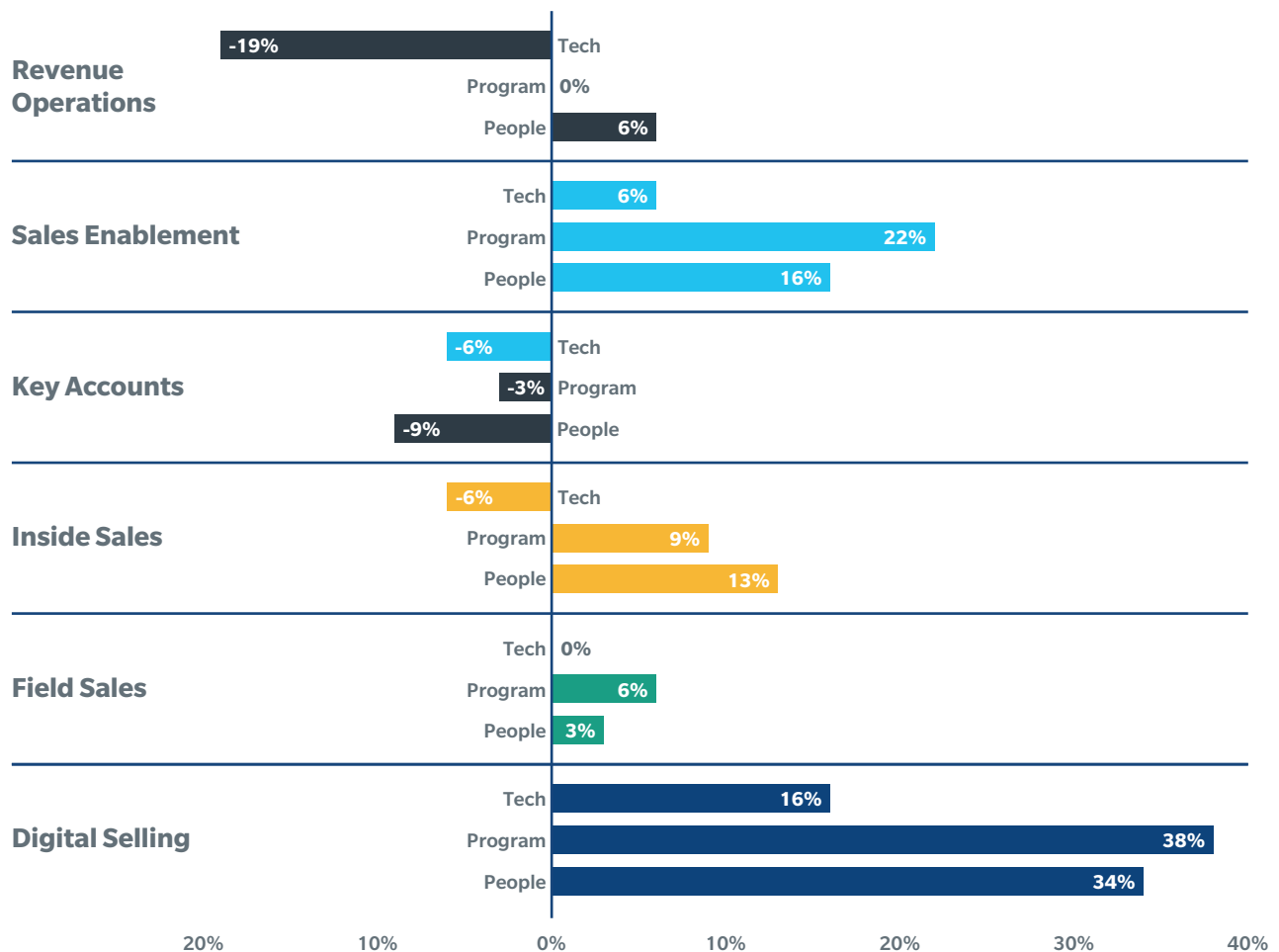
SBI’s 2021-2022 SalesTech Audit found that while many of these customer-facing technologies receive high ratings on overall importance and ROI when deployed, most organizations do not use them, nor do they plan to implement them in the next 12-18 months.

In 2022, SBI acquired Smart Selling Tools, the first company to comprehensively define and map the salestech landscape.

For more information on how salestech can boost seller productivity and accelerate deal momentum [click here](#).

HIGH-GROWTH GTM LEADERS PRIORITIZE DIGITAL SELLING INVESTMENTS

Difference in Percent of Leaders Planning Increased Investment between High- and Typical-Growth Companies



Source: SBI Annual CEO Survey, 2021. n = 100 B2B CEOs

Implication: Review salestech roadmap priorities for both seller and buyer impact

Across the past 18 months, many studies have pointed to B2B buyers' increased comfort making six- and seven-figure purchases through digital channels. However, to build buyer confidence in their purchase decision, companies require mature digital selling experiences that complement direct seller-buyer interactions. As revenue technology priorities are defined and roadmapped for 2022, sales leaders should prioritize investment in tools that address customer pain points and ease or enhance the buying experience. Typical capabilities enabled by these types of tools might include centralization of information for buyers, on-demand insight into product features and functionalities, and two-way dialogue between buyers and sellers by way of chat-like communication.

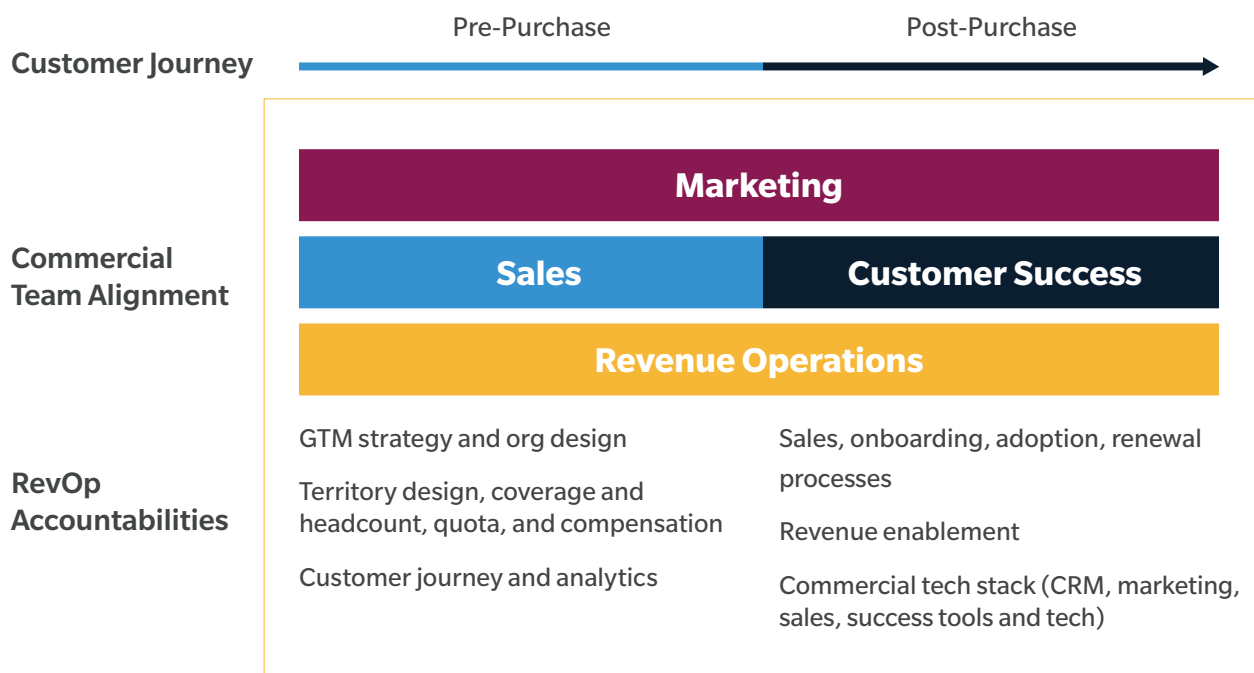
REVOPS - NOT SALES OPS WITH A DASH OF MARKETING AND CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Driven largely by vendor hype, RevOps became the answer to sales and marketing alignment issues in 2021. Companies hired RevOps leaders or restructured their sales, marketing, and CX ops teams, organizing these functions into a single team that, more often than not, reported into Sales.

Implication: Assess whether your team is ready for RevOps, and if so, align commercial leaders around its core objectives.

In 2022, RevOps can't be a new title for your Sales Ops leader. Done right, RevOps represents an evolution in how go-to-market teams operate. While Sales Ops represents the activities and processes that make the sales org run, RevOps should help define and orchestrate go-to-market strategy and operations across commercial functions, providing operations, enablement, and insights across the entirety of the customer journey - and ideally improving decision-making internally and how buyers engage with your organization externally.

REVOPS ALIGNMENT TO THE COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS AND CUSTOMER JOURNEY



B2B MARKETING AND DIGITAL MARKETING HAVE (FINALLY) BECOME SYNONYMOUS, BUT TALENT IS SCARCE

The pandemic forced many marketing organizations to rebuild their functions from the ground up, shifting the majority of demand gen investment to digital channels, building the operational infrastructure to follow leads through from origination to close, and finally figuring out account-based marketing to improve the efficiency and focus of marketing resources.

However, while demand gen and ABM represent the most significant increases in marketing investment in 2022, digital marketing and demand gen skills remain in short supply. To that end, several leading marketing organizations have shared efforts to retrain and retool members of the existing team through a combination of formal training and new on-the-job opportunities to learn in real-time. Field marketing roles represent strong candidates for this type of approach as they pivot from planning on-site conferences to monitoring and optimizing hybrid event experiences in real-time, with rich analytics pointing to in-the-moment optimization opportunities.

Implication: Support legacy marketer evolution with skill development resources and clearly defined marketing goals

SBI's latest data shows high-growth organizations plan to increase their marketing investment more than any other functional area (by approximately 10%) in 2022. To turn these investments into revenue growth, most marketing leaders will need to both build and buy new talent. Marketing and HR must partner to define the competencies required of their marketing teams and build talent development plans with aligned resources to ensure they can keep high-quality talent that's willing to learn.

IT'S TIME TO ADDRESS TECH CORRUPTION

The salestech space has exploded in the past few years and continues to grow, with more than 1200 solutions available today. On average, the typical sales org supports more than 25 tools in its tech stack (See below for an example). These innovations support every stage of the sales process and might be purchased to enhance, drive improved productivity per head, or provide deeper insight into customer behavior. Irrespective of the business objective, we see a number of common challenges that range from a poorly defined purchase process (only 37% of commercial leaders agree that their process is well-defined) to lackluster adoption. SBI's 2021-2022 SalesTech Audit found that on average, only 45% of commercial leaders believe their teams use the full potential of each tool in their salestech stack.

TYPICAL SALESTECH STACK

Tools Used in More than Half of Surveyed Sales Leaders' Orgs



Table-Stakes
Must-have sales tools for foundational activities, initial automation, and digital connections with customers.

Compete
Sales tools that enable companies to drive efficiency and effectiveness and remain competitive with peers.

Lead
Sales tools that automate processes and provide rich data for decision-making.

Source: SBI 2021-2022 SalesTech Audit, n=89 B2B companies

Implication: Centralize salestech ownership with clearly defined objectives and results

With supercharged innovation in the salestech space, 2022 has the potential to be the year that technology emerges as a key commercial advantage. However, today's unstructured purchasing and implementation processes and poor feedback on tool and technology adoption suggest that most companies will fail when it comes to embracing technology as a differentiator.

A good start would involve appointing a single owner of the salestech stack. This individual should audit the tools in place - organization-wide - to identify gaps and areas of overlap, as well as tool importance, ROI, and adoption. In addition, they should evaluate any and all requests for incremental investment and phase them, requiring a strong business case to ensure successful implementation. Finally, salestech represents an important strategic investment, and as a result, requires clearly defined objectives, aligned metrics, and regular reporting, so the organization can assess which tools are generating value and which should be cut.



CONCLUSION

As 2022 gets underway, CEOs must take a critical look across their commercial organizations. Their leaders are bombarding sellers with new tools and processes in the name of improved customer engagement and heightened productivity, but these “enhancements” need better orchestration and context. With nearly 60% of sellers actively seeking new opportunities, this influx of investment in tools and processes is low-impact at its best, and at its worst, disengaging for sellers. To ensure your company delivers on its growth initiatives in ‘22, consider how you would answer the following questions, each of which is tightly linked to a strategic imperative:

- How effective is your commercial organization - specifically Sales Enablement - at skill building and promoting tenured talent into roles of increased responsibility?
- How would you evaluate your org on each of the top drivers of seller retention?
- How would customers describe your digital buying process? If words like ‘easy’, ‘seamless’, and ‘helpful’ don’t come to mind, you have work to do.
- Do your operational teams connect end-to-end commercial processes and buying processes, or is it time to consider RevOps?
- How are the CRO and CMO supporting marketers’ skill evolution?
- Who owns the saletech stack, and what are his / her success measures?

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WHY SBI?

Driven by insights and delivered from experience, SBI continues to help clients grow their revenue, margin and enterprise value in ways never before possible.

Working with us, leaders can expect confidence and trust with experienced partners every step of the way. We engage and support our clients as an extension of their team, both guiding and working side-by-side to deliver relatable, practical strategies that work for today and tomorrow.

OUR CAPABILITIES

SALES OPERATIONS

In November 2021 we announced the acquisition of the Global Sales Operations Association (SOPSA), the leading sales operations membership network focused on connecting, bolstering, and supporting the professional development of the world's leading sales operations professionals.

The completion of this acquisition enhances SBI's ability to provide expertise to sales operations and to expand on the company's core mission, helping clients drive revenue growth.

SALES TECH

Our commercial tech practice, led by Jamie Halpin assists clients with productivity and performance improvement through strategic sales technology applications. We provide the breadth and depth of expertise needed to bring clarity to the growing and fragmented commercial tech landscape to guide clients on the optimal ways technology can drive their growth strategy.

MARKETING

SBI's marketing practice is led by tenured Marketing Executive and practitioner, Tracy Hansen. With experience leading marketing teams from startups to global Fortune 500 companies, SBI's marketing practice enhances our end-to-end go-to-market capabilities, ensuring a full solution between sales and marketing.

SBI RESEARCH

Our world-class team of Researchers and Analysts, led by Martha Mathers delivers current, frame-breaking, data-driven, and factual research that illuminates key drivers to help our clients accelerate their growth.

WHAT WE OFFER

SBI REVENUE GROWTH CONSULTING

For over 15 years, clients have come to SBI to deliver on their revenue growth needs. As markets become more competitive and the landscape continues to shift, our team of consultants and advisors who have been there and done that, can help any organization with actionable strategies to execute efficient growth solutions tailored to fit your needs.

SBI GROWTH ACCELERATOR

SBI Growth Accelerator is a highly customized and collaborative subscription service that helps you drive continuous growth and go-to-market execution.

ACCESS TO SBI PRO

An SBI Growth Accelerator subscription also includes access to SBI Pro, which houses our exclusive content, most valuable frameworks, popular models and tools, and proprietary benchmarking engine, all of which align to the SBI Growth Platform. Your growth advisor curates the information within SBI Pro specifically for your company, sharing with you the most relevant data, tools, and KPI-driven reports.

Connect with SBI today and talk to us about how we can help you on **your growth journey**.

CONTACT US: Research@sbigrowth.com