SALESHOOD

2025 Sales Kickoff Industry Report

AI

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Survey Highlights

As organizations prepare for their **2025 sales kickoffs (SKOs)**, it's helpful that the latest trends are emerging in planning, executing and measuring SKOs.

Based on insights from SalesHood's Annual Survey, companies are refining their SKOs to prioritize in-person engagement, cross-functional alignment, and measurable impact. This summary explores key findings from the survey, including the preferred formats, who gets invited, the revenue challenges being addressed, and the metrics used to evaluate SKO success.

From the dominance of in-person events to a growing focus on pipeline growth, win rates, and team alignment, this report offers a comprehensive look at how businesses are leveraging SKOs to drive revenue and strengthen team collaboration in a dynamic, evolving landscape.

Survey Methodology

The survey features input from **100 + B2B SaaS and software companies**, and reveals that **Sales Enablement** professionals lead the charge in sales kickoff planning, representing **68%** of respondents. Other key roles include **Sales Management** (12%), **CxOs** (7%), **Marketing** (6%), and **Revenue Operations** (5%), with smaller contributions from **Human Resources** (2%) and **Customer Success** (1%).

Sales Enablement	68%
Sales Management	12%
CxO	7%
Marketing	6%
Revenue Operations	5%
Human Resources	2%
Customer Success	1%

Here's a list of some of the questions asked on the survey.

1. What best describes your role?
2. How will you execute your sales kickoff?
3. Who will you invite to your kickoff experience?
4. What revenue problems are you trying to solve?
5. What topics are you prioritizing for your sales kickoff?
6. How will you measure the impact of your SKO?
7. What's your kikoff theme?

Sales Kickoff Event Execution

Sales kickoffs (SKOs) are evolving as businesses adapt to changes in technology, team dynamics, and economic pressures. Survey respondents shared their approach to kickoff experiences from in-person to virtual to hybrid events. Here's a summary of the question — **How will you execute your sales kickoff?** — and an analysis of the results. Respondents were asked to choose one answer.

Fully In-Person	**62**%
Hybrid (in-person + virtual)	**20**%
Fully Virtual	**13**%
We haven't figured it out yet	**6**%
We're not having one	**1**%

1. Here's a list of some of the questions asked on the survey.

The majority of companies **(62%)** are planning fully in-person sales kickoffs. This highlights a strong preference for face-to-face interactions, likely driven by the unmatched energy, alignment, and engagement that in-person events can deliver. Organizations may view these kickoffs as an opportunity to foster deeper connections, boost morale, and create memorable experiences that virtual settings can't fully replicate.

2. A Decline in Virtual-Only Events (20%)

20% of respondents are sticking to fully virtual SKOs. This represents a significant shift from the pandemic-era reliance on virtual formats. This suggests a more targeted approach to virtual SKOs, potentially tailored to specific regions or smaller teams. Companies embracing these formats are likely prioritizing flexibility and cost-efficiency over scale. While virtual events are cost-effective and scalable, they may lack the emotional resonance and interactive elements that drive deeper team alignment and engagement.

3. Hybrid Models Show Promise (13%)

Hybrid SKOs — combining in-person and virtual components — are emerging as a strategic option for **13%** of organizations. These events allow companies to balance costs and accessibility while still delivering personalized experiences. Hybrid models enable global teams to participate without logistical barriers, making them an attractive choice for companies with distributed teams.

4. Uncertainty Remains (6%)

For **6%** of companies, SKO plans are still undecided. This indicates either an intentional delay to observe trends or uncertainty due to resource constraints. Businesses in this group may benefit from leveraging data and best practices to decide between the evolving SKO models.

5. A Small Minority Opting Out (1%)

Only **1%** of respondents indicated they are not holding an SKO at all. This may reflect unique organizational dynamics or resource limitations. For these companies, alternatives like regional or functional team-based enablement sessions could help achieve similar goals without a formal kickoff.

What This Means for 2025 SKO Planning

The data suggests a clear move toward in-person engagement, reflecting the critical need for connection in a remote and hybrid work era. However, hybrid and virtual models are holding their ground as viable options for cost-conscious or globally distributed teams.

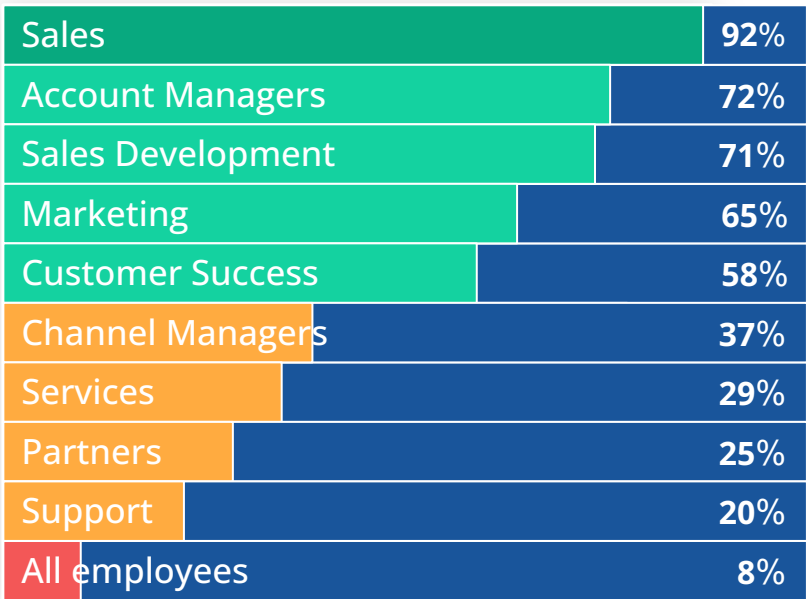**To stay ahead of the curve, organizations must consider:**

- **Strategic ROI:** Evaluate the cost versus impact of in-person, virtual, and hybrid models.

- **Inclusion:** Ensure SKO plans accommodate diverse teams across geographies and roles.

- **Innovation:** Leverage technology like AI and digital platforms to enhance experiences regardless of format.

Sales Kickoff Attendees and Participation

When it comes to sales kickoffs (SKOs), deciding who to invite is critical for ensuring alignment across functions and maximizing the event's impact.

Our survey results show that companies are placing a strong emphasis on sales teams but also inviting cross-functional groups to foster collaboration and alignment. The research shows that marketing is playing an increasingly active role in sales enablement.

Here are highlights from the survey question — **Who will you invite to your kickoff?**

Sales	**92**%
Account Managers	**72**%
Sales Development	**71**%
Marketing	**65**%
Customer Success	**58**%
Channel Managers	**37**%
Services	**29**%
Partners	**25**%
Support	**20**%
All employees	**8**%

1. Sales Teams Are the Top Priority (92%)

Unsurprisingly, sales teams dominate the list, with **92%** of organizations including them in their SKO plans. This aligns with the core purpose of SKOs: to motivate, train, and align sales teams to hit their revenue goals. These events are tailored to their needs, focusing on product updates, sales strategies, and best practice sharing.

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3. Representation Among Account Managers (72%) and Sales Development Teams (71%)

Account managers **72%** and sales development representatives **71%** are next on the list, indicating companies' recognition of the need to extend SKO participation beyond quota-carrying sales reps. These groups play pivotal roles in deal progression and pipeline generation, making their inclusion vital for holistic sales enablement and better go-to-market alignment.

4. Customer Success Gains Traction (58%)

Over half of the organizations **58%** are including customer success teams. This reflects a shift toward a more customer-centric approach, where cross-functional collaboration between sales and customer success is essential for onboarding, renewals, and upselling. This is a big change from the days when customer success was not included in sales kickoff events.

5. Channel Managers, Partners, and Services (37%, 25%, and 29%)

- **Channel Managers (37%):** Companies with indirect sales channels see value in including these stakeholders, who expand reach and closing channel-specific deals.

- **Partners (25%):** Including partners highlights the importance of extending SKO themes and objectives to external collaborators.

- **Services (29%):** Representation from services ensures alignment between pre-sales promises and post-sales execution, creating a seamless experience for customers.

6. Underrepresentation of Support Teams (20%)

Support teams are included in only **20%** of SKOs, potentially missing an opportunity to integrate the customer-facing insights they bring to the table. Companies could consider increasing their involvement to better align product and service feedback with sales strategies.

7. All Employees and Company-Wide Inclusion (8%)

Only **8%** of organizations are including all employees in their SKOs. In a bid to keep costs down, most organizations are recording their kickoff event keynote sessions, making the content available for employees and future new hires.

Expanding **cross-functional inclusion** beyond sales — like involving **marketing, customer success,** and other key teams — strengthens alignment and drives shared goals. The growing presence of marketing highlights the importance of **sales and marketing synergy** to fuel revenue growth, while including customer success reflects a **customer-centric focus** that ties sales strategies to customer outcomes. By thoughtfully selecting attendees, companies can maximize **SKO ROI** and drive alignment across teams.

Top Revenue Problems Leaders Are Facing

In an increasingly competitive market, organizations are laser-focused on tackling **key revenue challenges** to drive growth and efficiency in 2025. Our survey reveals that priorities like **growing pipeline**, **improving win rates**, and **pipeline progression** underscore the critical importance of optimizing **sales execution** at every stage of the revenue cycle.

The top focus areas include growing pipeline **(74%)**, improving win rates **(60%)**, and enhancing pipeline progression **(58%)**. These three together tell us how important sales execution is for leaders. Upsell and cross-sell opportunities **(48%)** and quota attainment **(46%)** are also significant goals. Additionally, faster ramp times for new reps **(42%)** and increasing Net Retention Revenue **(27%)** are notable objectives. Reducing rep attrition **(11%)** remains a lesser priority and makes sense since many companies are not in hiring mode.

Grow Pipeline	74%
Improve Win Rates	60%
Improve Pipeline Progression	58%
Upsell/Cross-sell	48%
Attain Quota	46%
Ramp Reps Faster	42%
Increase Net Retention Revenue (NRR)	27%
Reduce Rep Attrition	11%

Here's a summary of the findings to the question — **What revenue problems are you trying to solve? — metric by metric.** Respondents were asked to choose multi-choices.

1. Growing Pipeline (74%)

The most significant priority is expanding pipeline. This reflects a clear need to generate more high-quality leads and opportunities to meet revenue targets. Pipeline, pipeline and pipeline is what's top of mind for revenue. Companies are likely investing in marketing alignment, demand generation programs, and tools that identify and nurture more leads efficiently.

2. Improve Win Rates (60%)

Improving win rates is the second-highest priority, emphasizing the need for team-wide enhancements in closing deals. Organizations are focusing on equipping their sales teams with better deal strategies, AI-driven coaching, and tailored training to increase efficiency in moving deals through the pipeline and closing them. This broader focus ensures all team members — not just managers — are aligned and empowered to improve performance.

3. Improve Pipeline Progression (58%)

Closely tied to win rates, improving pipeline progression suggests a need to address stalled deals and optimize the buyer journey. This highlights the importance of real-time insights into deal activity and targeted interventions to keep opportunities moving forward.

4. Upsell and Cross-Sell (48%)

Expanding revenue from existing customers remains a critical focus. Teams are working to identify upsell and cross-sell opportunities by leveraging customer data, expanding relationships, and providing value-add solutions.

5. Attain Quota (46%)

Nearly half of respondents indicate that achieving quota remains a pressing challenge. This shows that teams are focused on setting achievable goals and providing resources and support to help reps hit their targets consistently.

6. Ramp Reps Faster (42%)

The need to get new hires productive quickly reflects a focus on onboarding programs, streamlined enablement processes, and tools that shorten the time-to-value for new reps. The content created for and delivered at kickoff events are great resources for ramping new hires.

7. Increase Net Retention Revenue (27%)

Retention is becoming a growing priority, with efforts directed at retaining customers and expanding existing accounts. This highlights a focus on customer success strategies and proactive account management to reduce churn and drive expansion.

8. Reduce Rep Attrition (11%)

Although a lower priority compared to other challenges, reducing turnover among sales reps indicates that organizations recognize the importance of maintaining a stable, motivated sales team. Initiatives in this area might include improving team culture, offering career development opportunities, and addressing compensation concerns.

The results highlight a strong focus on optimizing every stage of the revenue cycle — from lead generation to closing deals and retaining customers. Companies are addressing these challenges with initiatives targeting both efficiency (like faster ramp times) and effectiveness (like higher win rates). Solving these issues will require alignment across sales, marketing, and enablement functions, alongside investments in AI-driven tools, training programs, and pipeline management strategies.

Top Revenue Problems Leaders Are Facing

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Here's a summary of the findings to the question — **What revenue problems are you trying to solve? — metric by metric.** Respondents were asked to choose multi-choices.

The inclusion of Behavioral Change Tracking **(26%)** and Alignment & Collaboration Improvements **(25%)** highlights the growing focus on fostering sustainable behavior shifts and cross-functional alignment. SKO programs should incorporate hands-on workshops and interactive sessions that encourage team collaboration, hands-on case study group work and role-specific learning.

Notably, **28%** of respondents are still unsure about their measurement strategies, indicating a potential opportunity to guide teams in setting clear success metrics. Companies must prioritize defining clear success metrics before the event if they expect to see results. Ambiguity in tracking results can hinder the ability to assess ROI and make data-driven adjustments.

Basic knowledge retention **(17%)** rounds out the list, showing that companies are looking for revenue outcomes.

By acting on these insights, companies can ensure their SKO is not only engaging but also strategically aligned to deliver lasting revenue impact.

Sales Kickoff Themes

Having a clear and compelling SKO theme is essential for setting the tone, energizing teams, and aligning everyone around a shared purpose. A strong theme acts as a unifying message that ties together your content, activities, and goals, ensuring your SKO resonates long after the event ends. It inspires engagement, reinforces company priorities, and motivates teams to drive success throughout the year.

The survey respondents answered the question — what's your SKO theme — and 47% shared that they have one. Here are the top verbatim themes organized into four major theme drivers — **Growth, Collaboration, Excellence, and Motivation.**

Growth

- Goals include business expansion, doubling revenue in 2025, defending market share, and unlocking future opportunities.
- Keywords: "Expand", "Double the business", "Operation Revenue".

Collaboration

- Emphasis on fostering alignment across teams (e.g., "One Team One GTM"), breaking silos, and building a unified future.
- Keywords: "The Power of We", "Forging the Future Together".

Excellence

- Focus on driving accountability, implementing winning strategies, and elevating performance through skill development and focus.
- Keywords: "Empower, Evolve, Exceed", "Level Up", "Dominate".
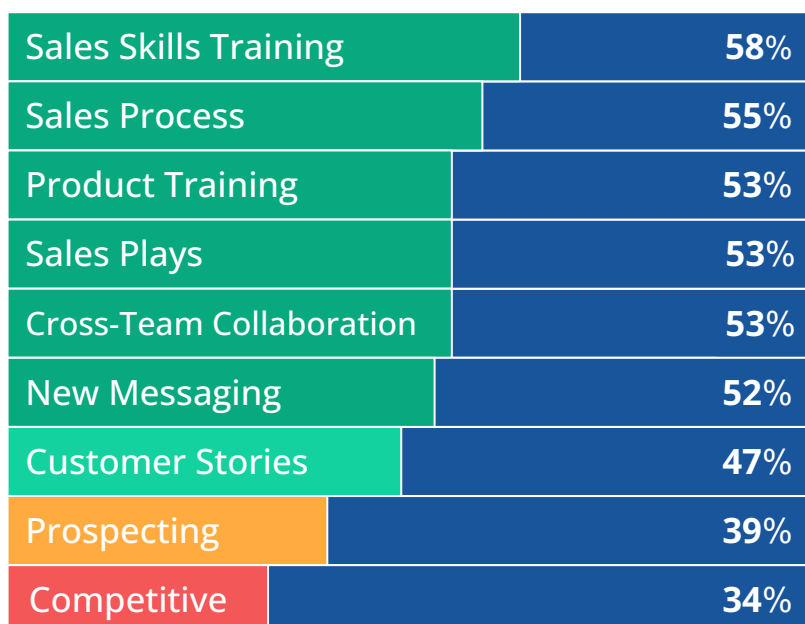
Motivation

- Inspirational themes to energize teams, including seizing the moment and pushing boundaries.
- Keywords: "Rise!", "All In", "The Time is NOW!"

By aligning these themes with SKO content, companies can inspire, unify, and equip their teams for a high-impact year.

Sales Kickoff Topics and Priorities

The chart highlights top priorities for 2025 sales kickoffs (SKOs). Focus areas include **Sales Skills Training (58%)**, **Sales Process (55%)**, **Product Training (53%)**, and **Sales Plays (53%)**. These findings underline the importance of arming sales teams with foundational skills and strategies to execute effectively. Cross-team collaboration and new messaging also feature prominently, indicating a need for alignment and clear communication. The similar percentages across topics suggest that companies are striving for a balanced approaches, addressing multiple facets of sales enablement rather than prioritizing one area exclusively.

The relatively lower emphasis on **Prospecting (39%)** and **Competitive Strategies (34%)** suggests many companies are focusing inward—on refining internal processes, messaging, and skills—rather than external market positioning. This reflects a growing importance of building a strong internal foundation to drive revenue growth and operational success in 2025.

Topic	Percentage
Sales Skills Training	58%
Sales Process	55%
Product Training	53%
Sales Plays	53%
Cross-Team Collaboration	53%
New Messaging	52%
Customer Stories	47%
Prospecting	39%
Competitive	34%

Sales Kickoff Event Checklist

Use this comprehensive checklist, combining insights from the SKO survey along with SalesHood's best practices to deliver a high-impact, revenue-driving sales kickoff.

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1. Define Clear Revenue Objectives

- Set measurable KPIs tied to revenue outcomes

2. Develop a Unified Theme

- Choose a theme that energizes teams and aligns with business priorities.

3. Plan Content for Impact

- Design sessions that align with your KPIs and drive measurable behavioral changes.
- Share success stories, customer wins, and future opportunities to build excitement.

4. Deliver High Energy Keynotes and Interactive, Hands-On Sessions

- Deliver high-energy keynotes that align with your theme and business goals.
- Conduct breakouts, role-playing exercises, and simulations to foster alignment and skill application.
- Include team-building activities to break silos and encourage cross-functional collaboration.

5. Leverage AI and Technology for Enablement

- Use platforms like SalesHood for: Pre-SKO enablement to train and prepare teams, real-time tracking of knowledge retention and engagement, and AI-driven coaching for personalized feedback and follow-up.

6. Focus on Knowledge Reinforcement

- Plan post-SKO enablement to ensure long-term retention and adoption of strategies.

7. Measure SKO Impact

- Use platforms like SalesHood to capture real-time insights and measure ROI.

Pro Tip: *Use SalesHood to streamline SKO planning, execution, and follow-up — ensuring your SKO delivers measurable results and accelerates sales productivity.*

Fast Start Your Year With SalesHood

SalesHood empowers companies to make their **Sales Kickoff (SKO) events** impactful, measurable, and aligned with business goals.

As a comprehensive **Revenue Enablement Platform**, SalesHood ensures SKOs deliver repeatable sales execution by guiding sellers on what to do and share across the customer journey. With **AI-powered training, coaching, and selling experiences**, SalesHood accelerates knowledge retention, reinforces behaviors introduced during SKOs, and drives measurable outcomes like increased productivity, improved win rates, and faster ramp times. Trusted by high-performing companies such as **Copado, DataEndure, SmartRecruiters**, and many more, SalesHood is purpose-built to deliver **fast, tangible revenue results** by turning SKO strategies into long-term success.

For more information, visit **saleshood.com**