

— A CALLEEBREE REPORT • NOVEMBER 2026

The State of Telesales **2027**

Why humans still win, where AI fits — and why the market is ready for a real disruptor.

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THE HEADLINE

In 2027, the best telesales operations will be **more human, not less — and they will use AI to make that possible at a price tied to results.**

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of customers say a company using GenAI must still give them a route to a human agent ^[3]

79%

of Americans strongly prefer dealing with a human over an AI agent ^[4]

2×

growth in buyer preference for outcome-based pricing, 2025 to 2026 ^[7]

3.7×

more likely to hit quota: sellers who effectively partner with AI tools ^[25]

³ Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

²⁵ Gartner, *Sellers Who Partner With AI Are 3.7× More Likely to Meet Quota*, Sep 2024 (1,026 B2B sellers).

⁴ SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

⁷ G2, *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, Jun 2026).

Two forces, one resolution

Two forces are reshaping telesales as we enter 2027, and at first glance they appear to pull in opposite directions.

The first is the largest wave of AI investment the customer-facing functions have ever seen. Service and support leaders put a median of 12% of their 2025 budgets into AI — more than any of the ten business functions Gartner measured ^[1] — and 87% of sales organizations now use AI in some form ^[2]. The marketing message from much of the technology industry is blunt: automate the conversation, remove the human, cut the cost.

The second force is quieter but, on the evidence, more durable: customers keep telling researchers they want to talk to a person. 87% of customers say a company using generative AI must still give them a route to a human agent ^[3]. 79% of Americans say they strongly prefer dealing with a human over an AI agent ^[4]. In B2B, 69% of buyers want a sales rep to validate what AI tells them before they commit ^[5], and Gartner expects three in four B2B buyers to actively prefer human-led sales experiences by 2030 ^[6].

Both forces are real. The mistake is treating them as a contest. The organizations that will win in 2027 are those that put AI *behind* the agent — making every human conversation better prepared, better matched and better coached — rather than putting AI *between* the agent and the customer.

At the same time, the commercial model for outsourced sales is being rewritten. Finance leaders are under unprecedented pressure to prove return: nearly half of B2B software buyers saw their CFO veto an already-approved deal in the past year ^[7], and preference for outcome-based pricing doubled between 2025 and 2026 ^[7]. Buyers of telesales services are no longer asking "how many seats, how many hours?" They are asking "what did we get for it?"

This paper sets out:

- **The evidence** that human preference is not a transitional phase but a structural feature of how people buy (Sections 2–3).
- **The economic shift** from retainers and per-seat pricing toward paid-on-performance models, and the macroeconomic pressures driving it (Section 4).
- **A practical standard** for what buyers should demand from any telesales partner in 2027 (Section 5).
- **The role of AI** in that standard — smart-matching, 100% conversation analysis and data-driven coaching — and why these three capabilities are what make paid-on-performance telesales commercially viable (Section 6).

THE HEADLINE

In 2027, the best telesales operations will be more human, not less — and they will use AI to make that possible at a price tied to results.

¹ Gartner, *Customers Are 3x More Likely to Use Third-Party GenAI Than Company-Provided Chatbots*, Jul 2026 (1,303 senior leaders).

⁴ SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

⁷ G2, *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, Jun 2026).

² Salesforce, *State of Sales*, 7th ed. (4,050 sales professionals, 22 countries), 2026.

⁵ Gartner, *69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights*, May 2026 (645 B2B buyers).

³ Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

⁶ Gartner, *By 2030, 75% of B2B Buyers Will Prefer Human-Led Sales Experiences*, Aug 2025.

The AI push — and the human pull

2.1 The investment wave

It is hard to overstate how much money is flowing into customer-facing AI. Gartner's 2026 survey of 1,303 senior leaders found that service and support functions committed a median 12% of their 2025 budget to AI, the highest of any function measured ^[1]. In sales, Salesforce's seventh *State of Sales* study (4,050 sales professionals, 22 countries) found 87% of organizations already using AI somewhere in the sales cycle, with 54% of sellers having worked with AI agents and close to nine in ten expecting to by 2027 ^[2].

The pressure is not only financial but organizational. In a separate Gartner survey of 321 service and support leaders, 80% reported pressure to make workforce changes as AI reduces contact volume ^[8]. The narrative inside many boardrooms is that human agents are a cost line waiting to be automated away.

2.2 What customers actually say

Set against that narrative, the customer research is remarkably consistent — across vendors, methodologies, countries and years.

FINDING	SOURCE	SAMPLE
87% say a company using GenAI for service must provide access to a human agent	Gartner, Aug 2026 ^[3]	3,566 B2B and B2C customers
54% trust a human agent more than AI for product or service recommendations (vs. 32% who trust AI more)	Gartner, Apr 2026 ^[8]	5,801 US customers
79% strongly prefer interacting with a human over an AI agent; 89% say the option to speak to a human should always exist	SurveyMonkey, Dec 2025 ^[4]	2,017 US adults
85% would rather speak to a real person than AI when contacting a business — up from 83% six months earlier; AI preference fell from 7% to 5%	AnswerConnect / OnePoll, Apr 2026 ^[9]	6,000 consumers, US/UK/Canada
75% want <i>more</i> human interaction as technology improves; 59% (global) feel companies have lost touch with the human element of customer experience	PwC, <i>Experience is Everything</i> ^[10]	15,000 consumers, 12 countries

Three things stand out. **First, the preference is not softening.** The AnswerConnect tracker, which re-ran the same questions six months apart, found human preference *rising* between late 2025 and spring 2026 while stated preference for AI fell ^[9]. Industry analysis of the Gartner data describes the human-access requirement as a floor that three years of record AI investment has not moved — structural, not transitional ^[11].

Second, people can tell the difference and they care about it. SurveyMonkey found 61% of consumers believe human agents understand their needs better and 53% believe humans give more thorough explanations ^[4]. Kinsta's national survey found half of US consumers would cancel a service if they discovered it was solely AI-driven, and 42% would pay extra for access to a human representative ^[4].

Third, customers suspect the motive. 81% of consumers believe companies deploy AI primarily to save money rather than to improve service ^[4]. When a customer believes the automation exists for the company's benefit and not theirs, every friction point confirms the suspicion.

¹ Gartner, *Customers Are 3x More Likely to Use Third-Party GenAI Than Company-Provided Chatbots*, Jul 2026 (1,303 senior leaders).

³ Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

¹⁰ PwC, *Experience is Everything* (15,000 consumers, 12 countries).

² Salesforce, *State of Sales*, 7th ed. (4,050 sales professionals, 22 countries), 2026.

⁴ SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

¹¹ Outsource Accelerator, *Customers still want a human in customer service*: Gartner, Aug 2026.

⁸ Gartner, *85% of Service and Support Leaders Are Expanding Human Agent Responsibilities*, Apr 2026 (321 service leaders; 5,801 US customers).

⁹ AnswerConnect / OnePoll, Apr 2026 (6,000 consumers, US/UK/Canada).

71%

prefer a human for pricing questions — against 12% who prefer AI ^[4]

2.3 The preference is strongest exactly where sales happens

The crucial nuance for telesales is *where* human preference concentrates. Customers are relaxed about AI for low-stakes, transactional tasks — order tracking, returns, simple FAQs. The preference for a human spikes when money, risk or judgment is involved.

SurveyMonkey's data makes the pattern explicit. For financial or billing disputes, 85% prefer a human versus 5% who prefer AI. For pricing questions — the heart of any sales conversation — 71% prefer a human against 12% for AI ^[4].

The B2B picture is the same. Gartner's survey of 645 B2B buyers found that although 67% prefer a rep-free *research* experience, 69% still turn to a sales rep to validate AI-generated insights before deciding ^[5]. Buyers are also skeptical of what the machine tells them: 51% say they are more likely to encounter misleading information from GenAI, slightly more than the 49% who say the same of a sales rep ^[5]. Gartner's Robert Blaisdell summarized the implication for sales leaders: sellers are not mattering less; they need to show up differently — at the moments where buyers need validation, reduced risk and confidence ^[5].

69%

of B2B buyers turn to a sales rep to validate AI-generated insights before deciding ^[5]

That is why Gartner's headline prediction matters for anyone planning a 2027 sales operation: by 2030, 75% of B2B buyers will prefer sales experiences that prioritize human interaction over AI, particularly in complex, high-stakes transactions ^[6].

2.4 Reading the data honestly

None of this is an argument against AI. Half of the customers in Gartner's 2026 survey said their interactions were *easier* when companies used GenAI ^[3]. When Gartner asked customers who were unwilling to use AI what would change their mind, the most common answer was simply the ability to reach a human if needed ^[3].

Twilio's research adds the operational detail: 78% of consumers say the ability to switch from an AI agent to a human is important, yet only 15% report experiencing a seamless hand-off ^[4]. The problem customers are reacting to is not AI's existence. It is AI as a gatekeeper — automation designed to prevent, delay or degrade the human conversation.

IMPLICATION FOR TELESALES

The question for 2027 is not "AI or humans?" It is **"where does the AI sit?"** In front of the customer, AI is tolerated for simple tasks and resented for anything that matters. Behind the agent, it is invisible to the customer and — as Section 6 shows — measurably improves outcomes.

⁴ SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

³ Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

⁵ Gartner, *69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights*, May 2026 (645 B2B buyers).

⁶ Gartner, *By 2030, 75% of B2B Buyers Will Prefer Human-Led Sales Experiences*, Aug 2025.

Why the phone still matters in 2027

82%

of buyers accept meetings at least sometimes with sellers who proactively reach out ^[12]

57%

of C-level and VP buyers prefer to be contacted by phone — vs. 51% of directors and 47% of managers ^[12]

+39pts

more likely to say a human rep understood their needs than to say the same of GenAI ^[13]

"Combining AI efficiency with human judgment, empathy and experience."

Eric Keller, Gartner ^[8]

The case for human preference applies with particular force to the telephone, which remains the most direct route to a decision.

RAIN Group's *Top Performance in Sales Prospecting* study — 488 buyers responsible for \$4.2 billion in purchases, alongside 489 sellers — found that 82% of buyers accept meetings at least sometimes with sellers who proactively reach out ^[12]. Contrary to the belief that executives screen out calls, phone preference *rises* with seniority: 57% of C-level and VP buyers prefer to be contacted by phone, compared with 51% of directors and 47% of managers ^[12]. Seventy-one percent of buyers who accept meetings want to hear from sellers early in their process, when they are still looking for new ideas ^[12].

The content that earns those conversations is also instructive. C-level and VP buyers are the group most likely (75%) to accept a meeting on the strength of an ROI case ^[12] — a direct line to the economic argument in Section 4.

The phone's advantage is structural rather than nostalgic:

- **It is synchronous.** A live voice conversation resolves objections, pricing questions and trust gaps in minutes, where email threads take days and chatbots stall.
- **It carries judgment.** Gartner's B2B research found buyers are 39 percentage points more likely to say a human rep understood their needs than to say the same of generative AI ^[13]. That understanding is what converts interest into commitment.
- **It is where validation happens.** The 69% of B2B buyers who want a rep to validate AI-generated insights ^[5] are, in practice, describing a phone call.

Gartner's service-side data shows how leading organizations are already responding. In its 2026 survey, 85% of service and support leaders said they were expanding human agent responsibilities, redeploying people toward the higher-value, higher-complexity interactions that customers value most as AI absorbs the simple contacts ^[8]. Senior analyst Eric Keller framed the winning model as "combining AI efficiency with human judgment, empathy and experience" ^[8].

For telesales specifically, this points to a clear division of labor. **AI should own the preparation, the matching, the analysis and the coaching. The human should own the conversation.**

¹² RAIN Group, *Top Performance in Sales Prospecting* (488 buyers, 489 sellers).

⁵ Gartner, *69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights*, May 2026 (645 B2B buyers).

¹³ CX Today, *69% of Buyers Rely on Reps to Validate AI*, May 2026 (Gartner CSO & Sales Leader Conference).

⁸ Gartner, *85% of Service and Support Leaders Are Expanding Human Agent Responsibilities*, Apr 2026 (321 service leaders; 5,801 US customers).

The economics have changed: from retainers to results

4.1 ROI pressure at the top of the house

The second shift reshaping telesales is commercial, and its origin is the finance function.

Grant Thornton's Q2 2026 CFO survey (232 US finance leaders) paints a picture of executives squeezed from two directions. Two-thirds expect inflation to rise over the next twelve months, and confidence fell across every measure the survey tracks — supply chain, cost control, growth targets, labor and technology objectives ^[14]. In response, 67% are changing their cost structures through optimization initiatives, and vendor and supplier costs have become the top target: 49% of CFOs plan cuts there, up sharply from 29% a single quarter earlier ^[14].

Grant Thornton's national finance lead Mike Hennessey put the mood plainly: "I can't remember a time when I've heard the term 'ROI' more frequently" ^[14].

The pressure to prove return is especially acute wherever AI is involved. Avalara's June 2026 survey of 1,505 CFOs and senior finance executives in the US, UK, Australia and India found that 92% feel personal pressure to show their AI investments deliver a decent return, while half said their AI agents had so far produced only limited measurable ROI ^[15]. Pigment's Q3 2026 CFO Index (2,000 finance executives across the US, UK, France and Germany) found 83% of firms overspending on AI, with "unclear ROI" a growing barrier quarter over quarter ^[16].

The macro backdrop is not incidental. Grant Thornton explicitly links the discipline to global instability and inflation ^[14]. 6sense's buyer research found that economic pressure shortened buying cycles for nearly half of B2B buyers, and 62% engaged sellers earlier specifically to commit budget before it could be cut ^[17]. Forrester's global buyers' journey research (18,000+ business buyers) reached the same conclusion from the other side of the table: budget constraints and continued economic uncertainty are delaying decisions and pushing buyers to demand price transparency and demonstrated ROI throughout the journey ^[18].

49%

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92%

of finance leaders feel personal pressure to show their AI investments deliver a return ^[15]

83%

of firms are overspending on AI, with "unclear ROI" a growing barrier ^[16]

"I can't remember a time when I've heard the term 'ROI' more frequently."

Mike Hennessey, Grant Thornton ^[14]

¹⁴ Grant Thornton, Q2 2026 CFO survey (n=232), 27 Jul 2026.

¹⁷ 6sense buyer research, as reported in Martal Group, *The B2B Buying Process in 2026*.

¹⁵ CFO Dive, reporting Avalara survey of 1,505 CFOs and finance executives, Jul 2026.

¹⁸ Forrester, *The State of Business Buying, 2023* (18,000+ business buyers).

¹⁶ Pigment, *CFO Index Q3 2026* (2,000 finance executives), Oct 2026.

11% → 23%

of B2B buyers prefer outcome-based pricing — 2025 vs. 2026 ^[7]

45% → 67%

adoption of outcome-based outsourcing models in two years ^[20]

43%

of agencies report clients shifting from retainers to performance-based fees ^[22]

4.2 Buyers are rewriting the contract

When finance tightens, the first casualty is any spend that cannot be tied to an outcome. That is now visible in how buyers want to pay.

Outcome-based pricing is going mainstream. G2's *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, fielded June 2026) found that preference for outcome-based pricing more than doubled in a single year, from 11% in 2025 to 23% in 2026 ^[7]. Fifty-two percent of buyers said variable pricing improved their perception of a vendor ^[7].

Futurum Research's 1H 2026 survey of enterprise software decision-makers found fewer than one in five buyers still prefer classic per-user pricing, with 43% preferring consumption-based models and 27% preferring outcome-based structures ^[19].

Finance is vetoing deals and shortening contracts.

G2 found that nearly half of software buyers had their CFO veto an already-approved purchase in the past year, and seven in ten said they are pushing for shorter contracts ^[7]. Among buyers who had experienced a late-stage veto, three in four now expect positive ROI within six months of signing, and they push for contract terms under twelve months at more than double the rate of other buyers ^[7].

Outsourcing has already made the shift.

Deloitte's *Global Outsourcing Survey* (500+ global executives, including 150+ C-suite) found that adoption of outcome-based outsourcing models rose from 45% to 67% in just two years ^[20], and that organizations using managed, outcome-based services reported 88% satisfaction against 71% for traditional approaches ^[21]. Cost reduction fell from the top priority cited by 70% of respondents in 2020 to just 34% — replaced by access to specialized talent and the ability to meet rising customer demands ^[21].

Agencies are feeling it directly. Performance Marketing World's 2026 agency survey found 43% of agencies reporting a client shift away from retainers toward shorter, performance-based fees, driven by clients demanding greater proof of agency value ^[22]. Hybrid "base plus performance" structures are becoming the default in professional services precisely because they split risk while still tying the upside to results ^[23].

⁷ G2, *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, Jun 2026).

¹⁹ Futurum Research, 1H 2026 Enterprise Software Decision Makers survey, May 2026.

²⁰ Deloitte, *Global Outsourcing Survey* (500+ executives).

²¹ Outsource Accelerator, *Outcome-based outsourcing now dominates talent strategies*: Deloitte.

²² Performance Marketing World, *Are retainers dying?*, Sep 2026.

²³ Taskip, *Digital Marketing Agency Pricing Models*, 2026.

4.3 What this means for telesales buyers

Telesales has historically been sold on inputs: seats, hours, dials, FTEs. Every one of those metrics measures effort, not outcome. In a market where CFOs are cutting vendor spend, vetoing approved deals and demanding six-month payback, an input-priced telesales contract is exposed.

PRICING MODEL	WHAT THE CLIENT PAYS FOR	RISK CARRIED BY	ALIGNMENT WITH 2027 BUYER EXPECTATIONS
Per seat / per hour	Agent time, regardless of result	Client	LOW pays for effort; hardest to defend in an ROI review
Monthly retainer	Capacity and availability	Client	LOW-MED predictable, but disconnected from output
Pay-per-qualified-lead / per-appointment	Defined, verifiable outcome	Shared	HIGH directly auditable; preferred for top-of-funnel [24]
Pay-per-sale / revenue share	Closed business	Partner	HIGH maximum alignment; requires the partner to control quality and conversion
Hybrid (reduced base + performance)	A delivery floor plus upside tied to results	Shared	HIGH the structure most professional-services buyers are converging on [23]

The models at the bottom of this table are only viable for a partner that can *reliably* convert. A telesales provider cannot offer paid-on-performance pricing on hope; it needs to know, call by call, which agent will close, why conversions are won or lost, and how to improve the next conversation. That operational confidence is what AI, deployed correctly, provides — and it is the subject of Sections 5 and 6.

IN ONE LINE

Input-priced telesales pays for effort. The 2027 buyer pays for outcomes.

²⁴ Fypion Marketing, *Outsourced Sales Company: The 2026 Ultimate Guide*.

²³ Taskip, *Digital Marketing Agency Pricing Models*, 2026.

What to demand from a telesales partner in 2027

Drawing the evidence together, buyers of telesales in 2027 should hold partners to a higher standard than seats, scripts and dial counts.

Whether the partner is an agency, a contact center, a freelance closer or an in-house team, the same five standards apply — and we believe they should be table stakes across the industry.

5.1 Human-led conversations

The customer on the other end of the line is one of the 87% who expect a route to a person ^[3], one of the 71% who want a human for a pricing question ^[4], or one of the 69% of B2B buyers who want a rep to validate what they have read ^[5]. A trained human should own the sales conversation end to end. AI should never be positioned as a substitute for the agent in a live sales or retention call; it should be positioned as the agent's support system.

5.2 Paid when you sell

The partner's fee should ride on the result. The client pays per agreed outcome — a completed sale, an activation, an install, a saved customer or an attended qualified appointment — and nothing for the calls that did not convert. This is the model the market is asking for ^[7,19,22], and it changes the partner's incentives in a way a seat or hourly contract cannot: a partner paid on closed sales has no reason to log activity that does not convert. In practice, performance pricing works best where there is existing phone volume to scale, because volume is what makes the risk manageable for both sides; campaigns should be defined, piloted and then scaled on the results.

5.3 Transparency the CFO can audit

A performance contract only works if both parties trust the numbers. Every call should be recorded and analyzed — not a sample, but 100% (see Section 6.3) — with ROI visible in real time, recordings available to the client, and a regular review cadence that closes the loop between client, campaign management and agents. The client should be able to see conversion rates, objection patterns, agent performance and the reasons behind every outcome.

5.4 AI behind the agent

Every opportunity should be routed to the agent most likely to close it; every conversation should be analyzed; and every agent should receive coaching driven by their own data. The customer experiences a better-prepared, better-matched human. They never experience a bot.

5.5 Continuous improvement as a contractual expectation

When the partner's revenue is tied to results, improvement stops being a nice-to-have. The coaching loop described in Section 6.4 is how a performance-priced partner protects its own margin as well as the client's outcome — and a buyer should expect to see it operating, not described.

³ Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

⁷ G2, *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, Jun 2026).

⁴ SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

¹⁹ Futurum Research, *1H 2026 Enterprise Software Decision Makers survey*, May 2026.

⁵ Gartner, *69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights*, May 2026 (645 B2B buyers).

²² Performance Marketing World, *Are retainers dying?*, Sep 2026.

A buyer's checklist

- 1 Who speaks to my customer?** A human, every time — or a bot with a human fallback?
- 2 What exactly am I paying for?** Seats and hours, or appointments, sales and revenue?
- 3 How is call quality measured?** A manual sample, or every conversation?
- 4 How are leads assigned to agents?** Round-robin and availability, or evidence of who converts what, and when?
- 5 How do agents get better?** Periodic training, or data-driven coaching tied to individual performance?
- 6 What does the reporting look like?** Can my CFO audit the outcome?

When evaluating any telesales partner for 2027, ask:

A partner that cannot answer all six convincingly is selling effort, not results.

AI belongs in the equation — behind the agent, not in front of the customer

The evidence in Sections 2 and 3 might tempt a reader to conclude that the safest strategy is to keep AI out of sales altogether. The data says the opposite. AI should not be taken out of the equation; it should be moved to the right side of it.

6.1 The productivity case

Gartner's survey of 1,026 B2B sellers found that sellers who effectively partner with AI tools are 3.7 times more likely to meet quota than those who do not — the single strongest competency predictor in the study ^[25]. A separate Gartner survey of 210 sales leaders in early 2026 found AI tools saving sellers an average of 4.8 hours per week ^[26]. Salesforce's 2026 research found top-performing sellers are 1.7 times more likely than underperformers to use AI agents for prospecting, and that the average seller spends only 40% of their time actually selling ^[2].

3.7×

more likely to meet quota
when sellers partner with AI
^[25]

40%

of a seller's week is actually
spent selling ^[2]

That last number is the key to the whole argument. Sixty percent of a seller's week goes to research, administration, data entry and preparation. Every hour AI returns to the agent is an hour that can go into the conversations customers say they want. The thesis of this report is that AI's job in telesales is to increase human efficiency and improve human outcomes, not to replace the human.

The platforms doing this well in 2027 do it in three connected layers.

²⁵ Gartner, *Sellers Who Partner With AI Are 3.7× More Likely to Meet Quota*, Sep 2024 (1,026 B2B sellers).

²⁶ Gartner survey of 210 sales leaders, early 2026, as reported in Sales.co.

² Salesforce, *State of Sales*, 7th ed. (4,050 sales professionals, 22 countries), 2026.

LAYER 1

Smart-matching

Decides who takes the call

LAYER 2

100% analysis

Records what happened

LAYER 3

Smart coaching

Changes what happens next

6.2 Smart-matching: the right call to the right agent at the right time

Most contact centers route calls on availability: whoever is free next gets the lead. Some add a skills layer. The next step is to continuously analyze each agent's *conversion patterns* — not just their overall ability, but the conditions under which they perform best.

That includes the time of day. An agent whose close rate peaks in the morning and fades after lunch should receive the highest-value leads in the morning. One who warms up slowly and closes strongest in late afternoon should receive their best opportunities then. The same logic applies to lead type, product line, customer segment, objection profile and call source. A living performance profile of every agent lets the system route each opportunity to the person statistically most likely to convert it, at the moment they are most likely to do so — and the more calls flow through it, the sharper the matching becomes.

The same routing intelligence works on the customer side of the call. Intelligent number rotation, anti-spam protection and local caller IDs lift the share of dials that reach a live person, so the best-matched agent is also connected to more conversations per hour. That matters more every year: as regulators tighten rules on untargeted dialing and carriers flag suspicious numbers, random cold calling becomes a brand liability as well as an inefficiency.

For a performance-priced partner, this is the difference between carrying risk blindly and carrying it with evidence. A partner can only commit to outcome-based pricing if it systematically puts the best-matched human on each opportunity.

WHY IT MATTERS

Availability-based routing treats every agent as interchangeable. Pattern-based matching treats every call as a decision — **who, what** and **when** — and gets better with every call that flows through it.

1–3%

of calls reviewed under traditional
sampled QA

100%

**of conversations transcribed and
analyzed — the standard buyers
should expect**

Every call produces

Automatic summary · Quality score ·
Sentiment score · Rule-adherence
check · Talk/listen ratio · Coaching
notes

6.3 100% conversation analysis

Traditional quality assurance listens to a sample — often 1–3% of calls — chosen more or less at random. That sample cannot tell a manager why conversions fell on Tuesday, which objection is costing the most revenue, or which agent has quietly developed a habit that is losing deals.

The standard buyers should expect is that every call is transcribed and analyzed. Each conversation should produce an automatic summary, a quality score, a sentiment score, a rule-adherence check (did the agent follow the script and the compliance requirements?), a talk/listen ratio, and data-backed coaching notes. Every objection, every compliance phrase, every moment where a conversation turned toward or away from a close is captured and categorized. The output is not a score on a clipboard; it is a complete, searchable record of what actually happens on the phone — and with personal data masked by default and GDPR and CCPA compliance built in rather than bolted on, that record can be shared with clients without creating a privacy problem.

For clients this delivers two things. First, **auditability**: the transparency a CFO needs before signing a performance contract (Section 4), reinforced by ROI monitoring that tracks return in real time. Second, **insight**: the ability to see, across thousands of conversations, which messages, offers and approaches convert — and to feed that back into both the client's proposition and the agents' coaching.

THE COMBINED EFFECT

Smart-matching, 100% analysis and smart coaching are not three products; they are one loop.

Matching decides who takes the call, analysis records what happened, coaching changes what happens next, and the next call feeds the matching. Operators running all three together report conversion gains that no single feature could deliver on its own — and, critically, they deliver them without adding headcount.

6.4 Smart coaching

Coaching is the highest-leverage activity in a sales organization, and the one managers consistently fail to find time for. Gartner found managers wish they could spend 13% more of their time coaching ^[27]. Korn Ferry's *Sales Enablement Study* found organizations with consistent coaching and impact measurement achieve 32% higher win rates and 28% higher quota attainment ^[27]; CSO Insights' earlier benchmark work found a formal coaching process lifts win rates on forecast deals by 28% and increases the share of sellers hitting quota by 10% ^[28].

The problem has always been that good coaching requires knowing *what* to coach, for *whom*, and *when* — which is exactly the information a 2% QA sample cannot provide.

A system that analyzes every call and tracks every agent's performance pattern can generate coaching that is individual, specific and timely — per-call coaching tips for the agent and broader training recommendations for the team. An agent who converts well on price objections but loses calls at the "I need to think about it" stage gets coaching on that stage, not a generic refresher. An agent whose performance dips at a particular time of day can be scheduled around it or coached through it. Managers receive prioritized coaching recommendations rather than a list of calls to listen to. The loop closes: analysis identifies the gap, coaching addresses it, the next call tests whether it worked.

+32%

higher win rates with consistent coaching and impact measurement ^[27]

+28%

higher quota attainment in the same organizations ^[27]

6.5 Why this is the only credible route to paid-on-performance

Put the three layers together and the connection to Section 4 becomes clear.

A telesales partner cannot responsibly offer pay-per-sale or hybrid pricing unless it can (a) put the right agent on each opportunity, (b) see exactly why every call succeeds or fails, and (c) close the gaps quickly. Smart-matching, 100% analysis and smart coaching are not features; they are the control system that makes outcome-based telesales commercially viable for the partner and auditable for the client.

This is also why the AI in a well-run operation is invisible to the customer. The person who answers the phone hears a human who was chosen for that call, who is prepared for that conversation, and who has been coached on precisely the moment where a sale is most often won or lost.

²⁷ Korn Ferry, *5th Annual Sales Enablement Study*, Gartner manager-coaching data, via Outreach.

²⁸ CSO Insights, *Sales Enablement Optimization Study* (2016), via Training Industry.

The 2027 outlook: five predictions

1

"AI-only" sales channels will be quietly rolled back in high-value categories.

The trust data — 54% trusting humans over AI for recommendations [\[8\]](#), 85% preferring a human for financial disputes [\[4\]](#), 51% expecting GenAI to mislead them [\[5\]](#) — points to automation retreating from pricing, retention and complex sales conversations even as it expands in simple service. Expect more organizations to follow Gartner's advice not to make GenAI a mandatory first step [\[3\]](#).

2

Human access will become a published commitment.

Just as "no hidden fees" became a selling point, "you can always reach a person" will be marketed explicitly, because 89% of consumers already say it should always be true [\[4\]](#).

3

Input-priced telesales contracts will come under direct CFO attack.

With 49% of CFOs targeting vendor costs [\[14\]](#) and nearly half of buyers reporting CFO vetoes of approved deals [\[7\]](#), seat- and hour-based telesales will be among the first lines questioned in renewal cycles. Partners that cannot show outcomes will be replaced by partners that can price on them.

4

Fees tied to verified results will become the default telesales commercial model.

Retainers no longer survive an ROI review, and per-seat pricing is losing buyer preference across software and services alike [\[19\]](#). The market will converge on structures where the partner's fee rides on the outcome, as it already has in outsourcing [\[20\]](#) and agency services [\[22,23\]](#) — and the partners able to offer that will be the ones with the analytics to carry the risk.

5

"100% analyzed" will replace "QA-sampled" as the quality standard.

Once buyers have experienced a partner who can explain every outcome, a 2% sample will look like what it is — a guess. Full-conversation analysis will move from differentiator to expectation.

[8](#) Gartner, *85% of Service and Support Leaders Are Expanding Human Agent Responsibilities*, Apr 2026 (321 service leaders; 5,801 US customers).

[3](#) Gartner, *87% of Customers Say Companies Using GenAI Must Provide Access to a Human Agent*, Aug 2026 (3,566 B2B and B2C customers).

[19](#) Futurum Research, *1H 2026 Enterprise Software Decision Makers survey*, May 2026.

[23](#) Taskip, *Digital Marketing Agency Pricing Models*, 2026.

[4](#) SurveyMonkey, *Customer service trends & statistics for 2026*, Feb 2026 (2,017 US adults; incl. Kinsta and Twilio data).

[14](#) Grant Thornton, *Q2 2026 CFO survey* (n=232), 27 Jul 2026.

[20](#) Deloitte, *Global Outsourcing Survey* (500+ executives).

[5](#) Gartner, *69% of B2B Buyers Turn to Sales Reps to Validate AI-Generated Insights*, May 2026 (645 B2B buyers).

[7](#) G2, *2026 Buyer Behavior Report* (1,038 B2B decision-makers, Jun 2026).

[22](#) Performance Marketing World, *Are retainers dying?*, Sep 2026.

More human. More measurable. Paid for by results.

The telesales industry is being told two stories at once. One says that AI will replace the human voice. The other — supported by every major customer survey of the last three years — says customers want the human voice more, not less, as technology advances.

The resolution is not to choose a side. It is to recognize that AI and the human agent are good at different things, and to design the operation accordingly: AI behind the agent, deciding who takes which call, analyzing what happened, and coaching what comes next; the human in front of the customer, doing the thing customers say only a human does well.

The commercial model has to follow the same logic. In a year when finance leaders are cutting vendors, vetoing deals and demanding six-month payback, a telesales partner that charges for effort is asking the client to carry all the risk. A partner that prices on outcomes — and has the analytics to carry that risk responsibly — is offering something the market has been asking for.

That is the state of telesales in 2027: more human, more measurable, and paid for by results.

Calleebree is building for that market

Everything in this report points to one conclusion: outbound sales is moving from a market that pays for activity to one that pays for outcomes, and the operators who win that transition will be the ones with AI behind their agents, not in front of their customers.

It also points to a timing. Customer preference for human conversation is holding or rising (Section 2). Finance leaders are cutting vendor spend and rewriting contracts around results (Section 4). The AI capable of matching, analyzing and coaching at scale has only just become dependable (Section 6). And the incumbent model — seats, hours and sampled QA — cannot be patched into the one buyers now want, because its economics depend on the very inputs the market is refusing to pay for. Markets rarely line up a demand shift, a technology shift and a structurally stranded incumbent in the same window. This is one of those windows, and it will be decided well before 2030.

Calleebree is a Swiss-made agentic AI platform for outbound sales. It applies the model described in Section 6 — intelligent matching of every opportunity to the human most likely to close it, full analysis of every conversation, and continuous data-driven coaching — to orchestrate human closers at scale, so that clients pay for the sales that close rather than the hours that pass. The platform is built by a team combining more than 15 years inside the telecommunications industry with two decades of experience building distributed AI systems at global scale.

Why now

€14B

A market still run on hourly billing

Global outbound telemarketing across telecom, insurance, energy, utilities, e-commerce and SMEs remains fragmented and priced on effort — exactly the model this report shows CFOs are abandoning (Section 4).

~70%

Buyers are already shopping

Roughly 70% of SMEs and enterprises are actively seeking to outsource or flex their outbound sales capacity — not "interested," actively looking. The demand is pre-qualified by the macro environment.

+40%

The supply side is growing

The global freelance workforce grew more than 40% over the past decade, and skilled closers across Europe, Africa, the Americas and beyond are looking for a platform that pays them on outcomes.

Now

The technology is finally ready

Agentic AI can now coordinate complex human workflows at scale, and the regulatory squeeze on untargeted dialing (STIR/SHAKEN, GDPR, do-not-call enforcement) rewards exactly the kind of matched, quality-scored calling described in this report.

SERIES A

€4–5M to take the product **fully to market**

Calleebree is raising a Series A of €4–5M to take the product fully to market over the next 18 months.

40%

SALES & MARKETING

40%

TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCT

20%

OPERATIONS & COMPLIANCE

INTERESTED IN INVESTING?

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A full investor deck and data room are available under NDA.

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