

# Use Cases of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the B2B Sales Process

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## Description

The megatrend of digitalization is one of the most researched current topics in sales management and influences the buying and selling of organizations. Especially the adoption of AI is seen as an important step toward digital sales practices. However, companies are still unclear on how to benefit entirely from digital transformation. For this reason, we formulated the following research question: *How can AI be applied in the B2B sales process?*

### Overview: Artificial Intelligence in Sales

- » Major effects relate to process efficiency, insight generation, and business process transformation.
- » The application of AI in sales was assessed as the second most relevant use case in 2020.
- » Approximately 40% of all sales tasks will be automated through AI. These will be mainly routine tasks.

### Use Cases of AI in B2B Sales

The well-established B2B sales process with its seven steps served as a fundament for our research. Based on qualitative literature research, we identified eight relevant use cases and allocated them to the appropriate phases in the sales process (see figure below).

- » The use cases can support or even (partially) replace human salespeople. However, human touch is especially required when negotiating and closing the sale.
- » The profiles of customers, competitors, and salespeople are an important fundament for the beneficial application of AI in sales.
- » The infusion of AI in sales and thus the increasing digital interaction requires a change of the sales function, and the design of a digital customer-sales relationship.

	Prospecting	Pre-approach	Approach	Presentation	Overcoming objections	Close	Follow-up
Profiles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chatbots	✓	✓	✓	✓	partially	partially	✓
Personalized recommendations				✓			✓
Dynamic pricing					✓	✓	
Order processing							✓
Emotional support			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Marketing strategy	✓	✓					✓
Rapid prototyping				✓	✓		

Use Cases of AI in the Sales Process



## Results

- » AI can be applied in every sales process step, non-complex tasks are easier to automate.
- » A database with profiles of customers, sales, and competitors are an important fundament for other AI use cases.
- » The sales organization, sales function and customer-sales relationship must be re-aligned to entirely benefit from AI.
- » AI in sales must consider both, the needs of customers and salespeople.

## Outlook

AI will infuse sales more and more in the near future and will undertake human tasks. However, companies must consider possible resistance. For instance, salespeople could be afraid of being made redundant and customers may feel discomfort being analyzed by AI.

## References

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