Appreciation for Data Analytics Twice
that of Artificial Intelligence in B2B Sales

Data analytics and artificial intelligence have been the **most hyped tools** for B2B selling activities over the last two years.

Yet, benefiting from data analytics and artificial intelligence projects remain a **lengthy journey**.

This article highlights the daily experience of 400 highly successful senior executives at medium and large companies with data analytics and artificial intelligence.

These 400 executives generously **shared their experiences** in using data analytics and artificial experience in their **high-level B2B sales**.

Here is what they told us in February 2020:

1. Data analytics is twice more appreciated than artificial intelligence.

*How satisfied are you with using Artificial Intelligence/Data Analytics
in helping your company's selling activities? (scale 0 to 10)*
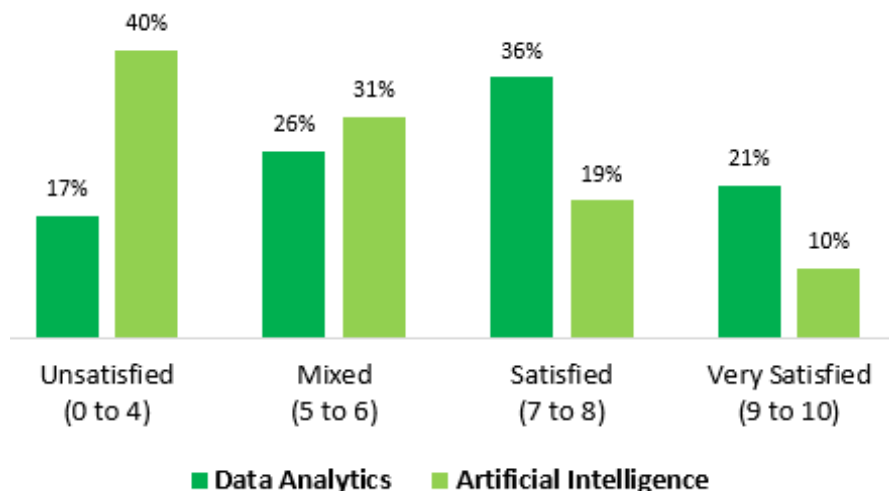
A majority (57 percent) of responding executives is satisfied or very satisfied when **using data analytics** in their selling activities.

A minority (29 percent) of responding executives are satisfied or very satisfied when **using artificial intelligence** in their selling activities.

2. No magic wand.

Data analytics can be defined as **analyzing raw data** in order to extract metrics and insights. In B2B sales, data analytics is used mostly for predicting promising prospects, anticipating customer churns and making sales teams more effective.

Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, is about parsing large data sets with **advanced algorithms** to identify insights and build predictions. In B2B sales, artificial intelligence is used mostly for automating and accelerating complicated data analytics.

What do have data analytics and artificial intelligence have in common beyond the fact that both are **hyped by highly successful firms** such as Amazon, Google, IBM, Microsoft and Salesforce?

- The prerequisite is to source data that is **relevant, reliable** and **cleaned.**

- Leveraging data increasingly requir**e**s **new in-house skill sets,** leading to new hiring to meet this demand, enjoying **active management support** and **starting with low-hanging gains** to create momentum.

- **Several years of trials and errors** will likely be needed to obtain probing and fruitful returns.

3. Data analytics satisfaction steps

The mapping of the executives' satisfaction rationales provides great insights about the steps to B2B sales success.

Executives not satisfied (17 percent) with the use of data analytics in their B2B selling activities are **assembling resources** or have not yet spotted a relevant application for it. They "*have little capability to use data analytics* and data is *not being used enough."*

Executives that label themselves mixed satisfied (26 percent) with the use of data analytics in their selling activities are **starting to master the tools** and learn to catch some benefits. They "*have the tools; they just aren't being used to their potential yet."*

Executives satisfied (36 percent) with the use of data analytics in their selling activities are obtaining good insights but are still falling short in **transforming these insights into actions**. They "*identify areas where* they *can focus better on increased impact of our services to customers.* Yet they feel they can *be better at bringing this to a meaningful story for our clients."*

Executives very satisfied (21 percent) with the use of data analytics in their selling activities **master their data** collection and use data analytics "*on where to **focus and prioritize their time and resources**. They can *benchmark and provide the client with **alternatives that are fact-based**."*

All industries are demonstrating **a growing appetite for data**. To sustain their implementation, companies keep elevating VP Data, VP Business Analytics, VP Business Intelligence at the top of their organizational charts.

4. Artificial intelligence satisfaction steps

Executives not satisfied (40 percent) with the use of artificial intelligence in their selling activities are mostly struggling to find compelling paths to match their selling need. This practice is ***not well developed*.** They sometimes consider that "*AI is seriously overhyped* and that it is *hard to find relevant data."*

Executives mixed satisfied (31 percent) with the use of artificial intelligence in their selling activities are mostly at the **early stage** of the learning curve and dealing with the human factor. They are *still trying to understand best allocation for return.* They face *scarcity in skilled resources.*

Executives satisfied (19 percent) with the use of artificial intelligence in their selling activities are **mostly building their capacity**. They consider "*It is a process to create greater efficiencies and to target activities.*"

Executives very satisfied (10 percent) with the use of artificial intelligence in their selling activities are **mostly intensive users** using AI in production projects. They "*use this constantly*" to "*apply fact-based management confirming or contradicting gut feeling.*"

5. Organizational impact

All industries are demonstrating a growing appetite for B2B sales data. To sustain their implementation, companies continue elevating VP Data, VP Business Analytics or VP Business Intelligence to the top of their organizational charts.

VP Artificial Intelligence or VP Data Science are now commonly located at the top of company organizational charts in selected industries such as Software and IT Security.

Conclusion

Vendor executives are mostly satisfied in using data analytics for their B2B selling activities as they obtain **insights to prioritiz**e their actions. **Investing in data** is the prerequisite to their success.

Most vendor executives, however, still struggle in using artificial intelligence for their B2B selling activities. The 10 percent most satisfied are the ones who are using **AI in production projects**.

Many thanks to the 400 experienced senior executives for sharing their insights, which serve as the foundational data in this report. We expect you and your team will find this report enlightening.

See more on **how these executives analyze the high-level B2B sales environment** and **how they build fruitful interactions with their fellow executives**.

*Methodology: This survey is based on 400 executive respondents involved in high level B2B sales at medium and large companies in February 2020. Their most frequent business titles were CEO, VP Sales, VP Business Development, VP Regions in located in the Americas, EMEA and APAC. Click to see the **questionnaire** and do not hesitate to **contact us** if you have any questions.*